794 distinguishes himself through diligence, obedience, and skill, he may
561 occasionally, if the elders so decide, be promoted to a more advanced age grade than his own and thus find himself on an equal footing with his elders.

794 The responsibilities of the Komo chief are considerable. He is the guardian of the altars which, as we shall later see, contain all the spiritual forces of the society; he is the only one able to manipulate them and is in charge of all the rituals which depend upon them. He
426 manages the patrimony of the group (seeds and money) which is kept in the cowrie or millet granaries, and which he may tap, in case of necessity, in order to make interest loans to members of the society who request them. (1)

1. See S. de Ganay, "Un jardin d'essai et son autel chez les Bambara /A Sample Garden and its Altar among the Bambara/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 17 (1947), pp. 57-63.

But this function, honorary and advantageous from many points of view, involves not only rights but, more important, duties from which the chief cannot be exemated. He must, under no circumstances, abuse his power; he can make no decision without the agreement of the members and may not act, even in the most insignificant case, without advising each and every one of them. Each person is kept up to date as regarding the smallest details concerning the general activity of the Komo and the entire age grade must be informed at the same moment. To break these rules would mean to become exposed to the greatest dangers. Just like the head of the total family whose power is far from being absolute (2), the responsible person

794 614 2. "The Mandingo fa," says Henri Labouret, in Les Manding et leur langue, "appears less free in his acts and decisions than the master of the ancient taisible fraternity. Far from being the tyrannical and strong willed autocrat whom people have frequently taken pleasure in describing, he seems to me, rather, to fulfill therole of a delegated administrator,

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•44

an enforcement agent, expected to conform to the directives decided upon by the domestic council composed of elders and family heads (pp. 54 and 55). The aim pursued by the chief is to administer wisely a patrimony which will always remain undivided" (p. 57).

794 must exercise his office with strictness, honesty, and thoughtfulness.

A. Creation and Consecration of the Komo

The few villages not possessing a Komo are linked to the Komo in a neighboring village. If a village decides to create /145/ an independent society, it delegates its elders to an important Komo (tro ba) whose chief, after the performance of divinatory rites, makes them swear submission to the altars which he will entrust to them after consecrating them; they promise never to drop the cult, never to omit a sacrifice or offering. After the sacs brought by the petitioners have been filled with necessary products (honey, pepper, charcoal, gold, copper, etc.), they are overflowed with the blood of victims provided by those about to take office and then rubbed on the altars of the tro. The new Komo becomes the trodeni of the one from which it thus receives part of its power. In the course of the night following the consecration and the daytime transfer of the boli (1),

1. The boli, as indicated on p. 130, are linked to a category including day and sun.

a member of the society brings to his village a pembele similarly consecrated by the donors. This shift at night recalls the period of Pemba's reign preceding the apparition of light and the regular succession of days and nights.

Once back in the village, the society, gathered around the chief, organizes its ritual, chooses its officers, obtains the necessary masks, builds the sanctuary, and places on it the altars upon which blood sacrifices will be performed daily during this first period.

101 word which we write and pronounce Kaarta means "country of
103 the Karé" or, more accurately, "the group of the Karé." Wher-
131 ever there are Karé people they are called, in the Soninké language, Karu-ta, [5] which is contracted to Karta. From this we made Kaarta because we misheard the long first "a." The word Kaarta designates a particular area only because of the people who inhabit it, and its value as a geographical expression is acquired only by extension. Among the natives the term is used for various areas within the region which extends from Goumbou to Koniakari and from Nioro to the Senegal River. On our maps, Kaarta is bounded by Kingui on the north, Diomboko on the west, Senegal and Bélédougou on the south, and Kaniaga on the east. However, all of these names of cantons themselves have very vague meanings.

101 For the purpose of the present work, the word Kaarta takes
103 on a special meaning. The Bambara who founded a clan at
131 Sounsan-na in the Karé country are called Karta-n-ko in the
614 Soninké language and Karta-n-ka-u (the Kaarta people) in the Bambara language. As a result, Kaarta has become the name of the areas occupied by the clan in its various peregrinations.

The "people of Ségou" acquired their name in quite a different manner, since they were named for Ségou, the capital of the clan. The country of Ségou should be understood strictly to allude to the to-da which, to be described in chapter 5, was, by and large the area surrounding Ségou and occupied by the chief and his family and followers. In a wider sense, the country of Ségou referred to all the territory under the authority of the Ségou clan. At the height of the clan's power, "the country of Ségou" occupied both banks of the Niger, following the axis of the river from Kangaba to Timbuktu.

101 Our European need to have things clearly defined may be
131 satisfied by having the territorial limits of Kaarta and Ségou set
631 forth on a map, but on the native level, with which this book is primarily concerned, such local definition has little relevance. These empires did not aim to dominate any given area but rather sought to exploit as large a number of individuals as possible without regard to country or race.

101 the word has so thoroughly taken on a pejorative sense that its
578 use may be a grave insult. What an insult it would be for a Moslem to be called a Bambara, i.e., an infidel, a pagan and an alcoholic!

101 In the strictest sense, however, the word Bambara is applied by the Malinké and, following their lead, by the French only to natives who speak the Bambara dialect and who call themselves Banmana or Bamana. Barring specific exceptions, we shall henceforth use the word in this limited sense in the present work.

x173 It is evident from the foregoing remarks that the Bambara belong to very ancient indigenous families; indeed, they themselves consider this to be so, and they are so considered by others.

Native informants are likely to say that the Bambara are former slaves of the Malinké; but they also say that the Somono are former slaves of the "Ségou people." Later on (see Chapter 4), we shall see in what sense [10] this slavery should be understood. It was a characteristic result of the political form of the native governments.

101 In addition to the general name given to them or accepted by them, which applies to one or another group, the Bambara are designated by terms expressing their geographic distribution. There are, for instance, those who live at Bélédougou (called Beledugu-ka-u); those in the Kaarta area (Karta-n-ka-u); those at Ségou (Segu-n-ka-u); those around Bani-n-ko (Bani-n-ko-ka-u). Each of these expressions also has a political connotation; Ségu-n-ka-u is often used for members of the ruling party, which holds power at and operates from Ségou, and only the context or the drift of the conversation will make it possible to know what people are actually being discussed.

Among themselves the various Bambara groups often describe one another by nicknames. The "Kaarta people" ironi-
[302] cally call the "Ségou people" Tlu-kene-u, "those with a single braid," because of a peculiar way of doing their hair, or Nya-ni-Nyéle-u, because Nya and Nyélé are popular names for women among the people around Ségou.

101 It is common, too, to call all the members of a clan by a
●614 name derived from that of a clan founder or ancestor. Thus, the

B 101 614 Kaarta people are called Nya-Ngolo-la after Nya-Ngolo, an ancestor of the chiefs of the clan; and the Ségou people are called Barama-Ngolo-la after Barama-Ngolo, an ancestor of their clan.

B S 101 [567] Nicknames are also used between individuals of different tribes. The Soninké often call the Bambara Dyon-ko (slaves) because, having long been engaged in the slave trade, they sold many Bambara as slaves (1). The Bambara generally call the

1. See in the Kaarta chronicle which follows how Massa and others after him captured caravans of Bambara slaves belonging to Soninké owners.

Soninké Marka (for Mara-ka). They still use the term Marka dialan'u (dry Marka people) to designate the Soninké who abandoned their own dialect in favor of the Bambara dialect. On the other hand, they use the term Marka kan'-fo-la-u (those who speak Marka) for those among the Soninké who have retained their own dialect.

In the Ségou region, the Bambara use the expression Bani-n-kono-u (birds of the Bani) for the Soninké, people who live along the banks of [11] that river; their more general term for the Soninké is the surname Dyeme-ka-u, from Dyeme (or Dyime) meaning "a long-legged water bird" of the marabou species. According to the interpretation given to me, the names Bani-n-kono-u and Dyeme-ka-u allude to periodic journeys made by the Soninké to the large commercial centers to the south, especially Oucrodougou [Ouagadougou?].

The Ségou country was called Dyeme-ka-u by the Bambara during the period of the Soninké rule (1). On the other hand, when

1. At this period, the Soninké chief, Souleiman-ba Kofta, lived at Sora, today a ruin, which the Bambara call Soro-toumou (ruins of Sora) and which is situated in the Ségou country between Massa-la and Kono-dimini.

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double meaning is no less evident in the Tarikh-es-Soudan, especially on p. 161 of the French translation. The same double usage is evident in oral traditions.

Thus it is understandable that the word Mandé has come to be considered as an equivalent of our words "empire" and "kingdom" when they are used in a geographical sense, and that, as a result, the term has varied in application because it depended on an ever-changing territorial domain subject to the domination of successive ma.

M F 103 642

However, it is not only from the geographical point of view that the term Mandé has remained indefinite or vaguely defined; the same uncertainty prevails on the political level. In a general way, Mandé is considered to be exclusively the empire of the Mandingue people, who are one of the subdivisions of the group called Mandé by the Europeans (1). In order to

> 1. Mandé, as the name for a group of peoples or of native languages, is unknown to the Sudanese; in this sense it is used exclusively by the Europeans.

understand the meaning attached to the word "empire" in western Sudan, it is essential to place oneself on the native level and not on that of our European civilization from which the term is borrowed.

F B 103 642 [614]

Briefly, the Sudanese empire is a system of clans. It is formed by bringing together of elements taken over from clans that have either disintegrated or are in the process of doing so. It acquires power and extension through the influence of the founder or, less frequently, of one of his successors, and then falls into decline at the hands of enemies or as a result of schisms which arise at the death of the ruler on whose success and "flair" its fortunes have depended.

It is this constantly repeated process of grouping, separation and regrouping which dominates the entire [15] history of the Sudanese empires and dynasties and which makes any study of the people so very difficult. The geographical nomenclature is,

F B 101 103

2: Monteil--17 G-5 (1902-1923) 1924 FA8 Bambara FA8
Malinke FA27

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and Appellations among the Malinké...] in the Bulletin du Comité des études historiques et scientifiques de l'A.O.F. 1918, nos. 3 and 4.

inhabited by independent Bambara.

This clan or, as one is tempted to say, this empire of Kelta was formed in the thirteenth century after wars between Soumangourou Kanté and Soun Dyata Kelta and with the aid of various elements (3), including a group of Mandinké which

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3. In the same way we shall see Biton forming furu-ba-dyon' from the ton-dyon', slaves captured from the chief of Dina, and from captives acquired elsewhere. In the same connection, see in the Tarikh el Fettach the curious story of the 24 slave tribes of the Songhaï clan which came from the Mandé clan.

[16] had been organized earlier by (1) a chief named Gourmandana.

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[617]
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1. Within the clan, the slaves, who always constitute the power of a clan, are divided into groups named in accordance with a particular aspect of organization. The Boula seem to have enjoyed a degree of consideration comparable to that attained by the Ton-dyon' at Ségou. Judging by the meaning of the word Bula, it would seem that they were "freedmen," and this is the meaning given by native traditionists. On the subject of the Boula, see the afore-mentioned work by Humblot. Boula women have the given name of Damba and they are addressed as Sakiliba, while the men are called Soussoro. This practice of giving a common name to a whole

*173 is known as the solo (1); they sought [19] a remedy to this

[551]

1. Solo is a woman's surname.

calamity by emigrating. Some went to Dia-bolo near Djenné; others went to Nya Ngolo-la in Kaminiadougou.

Is there a relationship between the origin of the Koulcubali family just discussed and that of the Kouloubali founders of Ségou and Kaarta? I have no doubt that there is, because all the Kouloubali go back to a common ancestor prior to the thirteenth century, one of whose descendants, allying himself by marriage to the Kefta clan, founded the branch of Kouloubali composed of the so-called masa-rin' families (1).

●[614]

1. By the term masa-rin', the traditionists mean, in addition to the ruling Kefta and their followers, various families who are closely connected with them. The following are prominently mentioned: the Kouloubali, the Konaté and the Kourouma. Not all the members of these dyamu, even the Kefta, are masa-rin'; only certain branches are.

The Bambara of the Tarikh-es-Soudan

175 The Bambara, established in the area with which we are concerned before or after the Kouloubali, whose traditions we have just discussed, have no precise traditions - at least none which give any detail. The general history of all of these peoples is doubtful.

To be sure, the Tarikh-es-Soudan does allude to the Bambara, but it is difficult to tell in what sense the term is used, since it often simply means "pagans." However, in the following citations, it seems to me that the Tarikh does refer to the Bambara here studied, all the more so because in this chronicle,

631 is highly variable, ranging from complete subjection to quasi-independence.

565 [563] The imperial clan, or, if one prefers, the dominant clan, most often prevails over people of races other than that of its own members; frequently this clan itself includes, at least originally, diverse ethnic elements. [158]

If such heterogeneous associates are to live side by side without clashing, they must have a large body of common customs, and this indeed is the case. Wherever one studies it, the native milieu resembles a compartmented area whose individual sections seem, at first glance, to be isolated. At the top of the social structure there is a kind of nobility composed of the head of the clan, his family, and then the families of the clan; next come the free men, simply free or members of castes; and finally the slaves. In actual fact, a continual reciprocal movement between these elements welds all of them together.

● 614 596 The fact is that the whole social body exists only through the severity of the life of the cells that compose it: the families. Among other characteristics, these families are very jealous of their respective independence; nevertheless, they are closely allied among themselves even as they freely absorb the foreign element constituted by the slaves.

It is, therefore, essential to concentrate our attention on the family cell in order to understand the essential element of native social life. This is all the more true in that all the native collectivities are, so to speak, modeled on the organization of the family.

The Bambara language has no word exactly equivalent to our word "family" in the legal sense (1). Different names

1. This is why we prefer the term "community," but in view of the remarks made here, the use of the word "family" will not be ambiguous.

are used to designate the collectivity under the authority of the

614 596 fa (2), according to whether the group itself is meant or the

> 2. Fa means "lord," "master," "patriarch," or "father," depending on the circumstances. Within the family, it corresponds very closely to the titular incumbent of such rank and high office who led Mistral [Ed., a French poet] to call his father: "my lord father," or "the master."

place which this collectivity occupies.

571 595 Let us note at the start that any collectivity forming an association is a ton'; thus, this is the case for all persons under the authority of one fa, and from this point of view, each of them is a ton'-den', literally, "a child of the ton'," i.e., member of the ton'. The word ton'-denya derives from the same word and is commonly used as a collective designation for all the members of the same ton'. This is the equivalent of the French word [159] société [Ed., society, association] or confrérie [Ed., brotherhood, confraternity]. The head of the ton' is the ton'-tigi, a term by which honor is paid to the head of an important family, and which, in some respects, is the equivalent of our [Ed., French] words notable [Ed., person of note, dignitary] and notabilité [Ed., notability, principal person].

614 596 If one considers the family as an association of the issue of the same parents, the term ba-denya is used, derived from ba-den'. Since the word ba means "mother" and, in the broad sense, "progenitor," mother or father, the word ba-den' is used for any of their issue, hence "children," "brothers," and "relatives," while ba-denya means "fraternity" "kinship."

Although, in the restricted sense in which we shall use it, the word ton' refers to anyone living under the authority of the ton'-tigi, whether or not he is connected by descent, the more exact term, ba-denya, refers only to those whose

614 descent is in the male line from a common male ancestor or,
596 even more narrowly, to uterine brothers and sisters. The two terms, ton' and ba-denya, have a meaning which differs from that of our word "family," which is defined in our legal terminology as "the totality of persons united by ties of kinship or affinity."

592 The Bambara family lives in huts which are connected by an enclosure or completely surrounded by the enclosure when its two extremities are supported on a kind of vestibule (blon'). The enclosure is called gwa in some dialects, whence the name gwa-tigi, a term of respect for the fa, master of the house.

Gwa, therefore, means "family" only indirectly, and it is very difficult to reconcile this word with the word "family," since the gwa houses people who are not members of the family and, on the other hand, does not house all the members of the family.

Besides, it should be noted that the word gwa in its meaning of "enclosure" is used to designate all sorts of agglomerations likewise enclosed, notably livestock folds. The variants wore and gore, which are more specifically applied to these folds, may also be used, and actually are in some regions, in forming the names of settlements. The form kore or kori, common in expressions of courtesy, has the same meaning; kori ka kende? means literally, "Is all the house well?" [160]

In some Bambara dialects, the word so is used instead of gwa. The primary meaning of the word so is also "enclosure" and, more especially, "hedge of thorns," by which all primitive establishments are protected; so-tigi has the same meaning as gwa-tigi. The word so also means "household," i.e., the contents of a house, including all within it, whether on a permanent or temporary basis and whether or not belonging to the family.

It is common practice, however, to use so and gwa in the narrow sense of "people of the family," i.e., those living under the authority of the same fa.

592 It may be said, in short, that there is no exact term
601 for designating expressly and exclusively a collectivity
596

The Patriarchal Community

When the fa is dead, all his property remains jointly among his legal heirs, thus constituting a patriarchal community whose investigation has two parts: the community of persons and the community of property. [173]

I. The Community of Persons

Members of the community. The patriarchal community is made up solely of the legitimate descendants of the deceased fa: immediate descendants (sons and daughters), or his descendants exclusively in the male line (descendants of his sons and grandsons).

The descendants of the fa through his daughters are outside the community since they belong to the patriarchal communities of their respective fathers.

If, at his death, the fa leaves no male heirs, there can be no patriarchal community; his property is divided among his daughters or, if there are none, among his brothers. If only a father or mother or some other ascendant were left, his property would go to them, or if he leaves only daughters, his property goes to them, but in either case there will no longer be a community.

Legitimacy is the necessary and sufficient condition for inclusion as a member of the community. A legitimate child is one born of a marriage, that is, of a union between two free individuals that conforms to custom. When slavery introduced concubinage into the household, however, the rule was relaxed because a free man was unwilling to have his sons slaves. In practice, therefore, maternity resulting from intercourse with a free man frees his concubine from slavery, and the children of the union become members of the community. This dangerous privilege is often contested by agnate brothers born of free mothers.

Given the diversity of conjugal bonds, ranging from marriage to free union, it is easy to imagine the discussions that

848 596 614 578 arise on the subject of legitimacy. During the fa's lifetime, his authority imposes whatever solution pleases him, but when he is gone, the disputes involving status are all the more violent for having been suppressed or evaded for so long.

These disputes gain strength also from the difference in 614 596 rank which the members have within the community. The totality of prerogatives of all kinds which raise the fa above all others constitutes a kind of superior dignity whose essence is the omnipotence covered by the word faya, from which came the title fa [174] (master, lord). It is in reference to the faya that the members of the community are ranked.

[562] Only male members can advance claims to the faya, and because they can do this, they can all call themselves fa. On the other hand, women can never hold this authority; they are fantan'-u, "powerless."

Among the fa-u there are distinctions based on degree of 596 614 601 561 kinship and on age; those most closely related to the fa will be the first to receive the honors about to be described. Male descendants in the first degree form a sort of senate of which the eldest is a kind of president-by-birth; he is truly the fa, the actual representative of the deceased. The one immediately following him by rank in terms of age is his syere (follower), his heir presumptive at the head of the community. The other senators, usually brothers of the fa, are uncles (bina-u) to the descendants of the second degree and their children. By reason of the authority associated with the position of bina-u in the community, this kinship term has come to be a title of respect which is bestowed on men toward whom one wishes to show particular esteem (1). Because of their age,

1. It is worthy of note that in Uncle Tom's Cabin, Miss Stowe explains that among the slaves in America the word "uncle" had precisely this meaning as a title of respect and honor.

all the senators of the community are commonly called koro-u, "the elders," and the fa is first among them.

561 Among the rest of the men in the community, one
596 distinguishes those who, being circumcised, are married and
614 even fathers of families or who are about to become one or the other; these men are called kamalen'-u, literally, "the young masters." Finally there are the uncircumcised: first, the adolescent boys called soli-ma-u, "people of the soli," that is to say, who will soon be circumcised; the others are small boys (den-tye-u).

596 The fa, his election and installation. The personage
614 in the community on whom all attention is concentrated is the fa.

Even if during the life of the fa his successor is known, it does not always happen that the replacement will follow as was intended. [175]

In the first place, the designated heir is free to refuse the faya for any reason he pleases, including solely that of personal convenience. The chronicle of Ségou relates that Biton's son, who lived at Oftala, refused the faya because of the excesses of the "people of Ségou."

More often, however, the faya eludes claimants for two main reasons.

No one can become fa if he does not belong to the community. Hence, anyone who ceases to be a member of the community, whether voluntarily or not, cannot attain the faya. One may cease to belong to the community either in fact or by law. The former condition would include prolonged absence, enslavement, settling abroad without hope of return, etc. This brings about a kind of suspension of the exercise of rights, but not their abrogation. On the other hand, when the member expressly renounces the community or when he is excluded by the decision of the fa (1) and the senate, he is

1. So it was that Ma-n-son decreed that his brothers Séri and Ba were excluded from the faya, because they merely looked on as spectators when he was struggling with Nyana-n-koro and had thus shown themselves hostile to the fa.

596 deprived of his rights, he and subsequently those who would
614 represent him; the branch of the family of which he is head is henceforth dead so far as the family is concerned.

In the second place, no member of the community
[848] attains the faya unless he fulfills certain conditions, of which the first are legitimacy and primogeniture.

The fact that the claimant is a member of the com-
[578] munity implies that he is legitimate. Since it does happen, however, that the question may not have actually been investigated or, by the wish of the fa, not even been raised, the legal heirs who would be injured and intriguers who seek any pretext -- and there are always some of these persons -- raise the question, and infinite complications often follow.

Primogeniture is equally subject to challenge, and the opposition everywhere finds it a convenient motive for their
[595] machinations. It is, indeed, understandable that in polygamous households, with the wives sometimes residing in various places apart from the husband, simultaneous or at least close births give rise to disagreements as to which son was in fact the first-born.

Finally, even though he may actually be the eldest legitimate son, the claimant may find himself passed over because of measures taken [176] against him by the late fa. It appears that although custom favors the eldest legitimate son, it yields to the expressed wishes of the fa if the senate agrees to his rejecting the candidate. This is a grave step and one which may lead to the most violent reactions.

This raises the question of whether special talents or aptitudes should be required of the claimant, over and above those of legitimacy and primogeniture. For example, can he be required to be healthy, active, and a good administrator? It appears that the senate may choose to eliminate a person it deems unworthy. This applies particularly to a free man who has voluntarily fallen from that state by living like a caste member or a slave. By this behavior he has already excluded himself from the community, but it sometimes happens that his actual exclusion has not been noted or announced before the question of accession to the faya arises.

596 614 Most often, however, the debates are concerned either with legitimacy or with primogeniture, and it is by no means rare for a fa, before his death, to insist that the one chosen be the one designated by custom and to threaten to call down curses on anyone who should try to bypass him or to reject his authority (1).

1. Ngolo and Ma-n-son both acted in this manner, according to the chronicle of Ségou.

In associations which have adopted a community organization analogous to that of the family, the election of a head is determined solely by these factors. It may be concluded that these are the bases consecrated by custom and that any other arrangements can only result in the worst kind of disagreement.

567 578 596 614 There is confirmation for this. Where slaves are numerous and well organized, they may refuse to recognize the new fa and choose another from among the members of the community. They may even decide to give themselves to a foreign master on the pretext that the fa imposed upon them by custom does not meet with their approval. This is a disaster which jeopardizes the wealth, strength, and even the unity of a family, for it can happen, in order to deal with the crisis, that a compromise is made which more or less ignores the regularly designated fa. This results in wrangling which usually ends with a schism in the community.

The history of these countries tells of many such cases, [177] because the slaves, upon becoming powerful, made the law in the families. The chronicle of Ségou thus relates that the slaves belonging to Dina Wara gave themselves to Biton upon the death of the former. It goes without saying that endless intrigues always precede such defections. The really successful fa, such as Biton, earned their reputations as able politicians and increased their fortunes precisely by their ability to avoid such disasters in their own communities, while stirring them up elsewhere. [662]

596
614 In principle, even a duly recognized fa is not installed until 40 days after the death of his predecessor. When there is no dispute, he in fact functions as fa at once; when, on the other hand, there is disagreement, the period may be extended.

The 40 days do not create an hiatus between the two administrations. When the new fa is installed, however long a time may have passed since the death of the predecessor, his faya is considered to date from the day of the latter's death. That is why the temporary official makes an inventory accounting for everything, if possible in the presence of the new fa, so that there will be no question when he turns over the inheritance.

Thus, this delay imposed by beliefs (ascribable, apparently, to magic) governed by respect for the mysterious workings of nature, has given rise to a kind of suspension of civil affairs, which allows the community to accept only a chief whom it recognizes because he fulfills the conditions required by custom.

Once he is recognized and installed, the fa continues in office no matter what befalls him; he cannot be removed for any reason whatsoever. When he is physically and morally unable to act, however, he is replaced by his eventual successor. So it was that when Sounsan was very old, he relinquished the faya to Massa who, in turn, did the same thing with respect to Béni-Fali.

It may even come about that the chosen fa is absent for an indefinite period. This happened, as we have seen, in the case of Dessé-koro, who was a prisoner at Ségou. He was not superceded, but in order to avoid the difficulties of an indefinite interregnum, Sira Bo was asked to take over the faya. He agreed only on condition that he would not be dispossessed if Dessé-koro should return. Mo-Siré, "little brother" (duani), i.e., uterine younger brother of Dessé, [178] promised in Dessé's name that Sira Bo would remain fa as long as he lived. When Dessé returned, he respected the promise made in his name by his duani. This is a typical example of the manner in which compromises can be made with custom.

596 614 The functions of the "fa." The duties of the fa are many and complex; for the sake of clarity, we shall study them under three headings: cult; relations between communities; administration of property (which will be studied in connection with community property).

596 614 782 Cult. Religion gives considerable strength to the family since nothing is decided without consulting the manes and the gods. Raffenel has given us a picture of old Niany praying to his manes on behalf of his absent son: "O my God, I command my son to your case since he has gone away on a mission important to all of us. Be with him on his journey. Preserve him from the wicked and from all misfortune so that he may once again enter by this door through which he departed and before which I am now kneeling. I implore you, O my God, to restore him to my love and to that of his mother, his brothers and his sisters (1)."

[114]

1. In spite of deviations due to Raffenel's desire to give a personal and literary touch to what he reports, the essential points of this prayer are accurate, and that is why I quote it.

[787] The chronicle of Kaarta tells us that old Sounson begged for early death as a sign that his lineage would be powerful in the future. Also, in order to make a prophecy come true, Deniba Bo submitted to the fatal blows of the Khassonké to make sure that his people would conquer the country.

After all, no one is free of fear of the gods, not even those whom one would take for brave spirits. Raffenel tells us that Bouo, his informant, feared the wrath of the god whose secrets he had revealed. The chronicle of Ségou tells that Ngolo, thinking he had aroused the wrath of his manes by encouraging evil desires in his eldest son, Ntyi, did not hesitate to sacrifice his [179] own grandson, the son of the aforesaid Ntyi, an atrocity which bears witness to a faith that was as profound as it was barbarous.

596 614 787 It is the duty of the fa to see to the cult. He projects everything that happens to him personally to the supernatural plane so as to come to conclusions that will guide his own conduct. He discerns in the most ordinary dreams indications of what will please the dead. Furthermore, the people around him point out the signs of divine will that they have observed. If, as happens in great houses, the fa is obliged to turn over part of his responsibility to the family gods to one of his confidantes, the latter will not fail to keep him informed of anything significant that may be revealed.

[577] Thus, daily life is unceasingly dominated by the supernatural, and every important event is conditioned by these beliefs. This is readily seen in all the family institutions: birth, circumcision, marriage, and death.

[577] It follows that the moral behavior of the family is a concern of the fa. Whenever something abnormal or painful occurs, the fa looks into it. Do the dead perhaps have reason to be dissatisfied? Have they been neglected or offended? He questions them, and if he finds confirmation for his suspicions, he at once seeks to appease the manes in whatever way they desire. If the trouble persists, he investigates further, and sometimes everyone in the house is questioned or, if one prefers, made to confess, even infants. Could one of them, moved by ill feeling, have uttered maledictions when invoking the dead?

614 596 783 [578] When the fa himself is ill, this general confession is virtually obligatory. This is because the absolute authority of a fa can hardly fail to arouse hatred, and hatred, a bad counselor, makes people resort to magic to rob the more powerful of life. Fear that the elder's "clairvoyance" will discover the wickedness in the depths of one's soul and punish it usually induces the guilty person to obtain a pardon for his wrongdoing by confessing it, and then everything returns to normal.

596 614 Upon the death of the fa, it is the first duty of his successor to try to discover, by any means, the causes of death and to avenge it if need be.

[763] Everything which the old fa was wont to honor, which forms the spiritual treasure [180] of the family, must also be

596 honored by the new fa, and there is nothing to prevent him
614 from adding to the treasure.

769 The basic cult of the family is the cult of the ancestors. Although the dead are frequently buried outside the family residence, their souls are thought to live in the blon' of the dwelling. The blon' is a hut with two openings on opposite sides, one [343 592] to the street and the other to the interior, usually the courtyard. It is impossible to enter or leave a house without going through the blon', where there is always a guard, at least in important houses. The ancestors are usually represented in the 778 blon' by a group of crude, conical clay figures of a man and 769 woman, the latter identifiable by the exaggerated breasts. Sometimes the symbol of the dead is a small board about a meter long, twenty centimeters wide, and a little more than a centimeter thick; at one of its extremities a slight protuberance vaguely suggests a head, a kind of ellipsoidal cylinder with eyes, nose, mouth, and chin faintly carved on one side. On the side with the face, the board has a checkerboard pattern, often of alternating black and red squares, probably to indicate the material of a loincloth. The lower extremity of the figure has a semicircular portion cut away to give the effect of legs spread apart when the effigy is set up.

769 Whatever form it may have, the representation of the
782 dead is called kara (1) and serves in some manner as an altar
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1. In Soninké, kara means "to die" and "death."

on which libations are poured and to which are attached the remains of the sacrifices made to the dead (su-u). Nevertheless, it is also a very widespread practice to make libations and sacrifices before the door of the blon' and, more rarely, before the door of an inner hut. In this case the liquid is poured and [775] the remains smeared on the vertical edge of the opening. This practice is based on the belief that the souls of the dead ancestors like to return to the place where the fa liked to sit during his lifetime. Undoubtedly, the ancestors are regarded as guardians of the threshold; they are [181] honored as such because it is believed that they prefer to be honored in this way.

769 It has the same base: request, offering, communion. In addition, there is a liturgy appropriate to each nyana, in particular, the mysterious sayings that attract the god and make him [183] the actual servitor of the person uttering these sayings, rather than a benevolent protector. This shows the antithesis as to final ends between religion and magic, as was set forth in Chapter 2 of the present work.

596 The fa also has the responsibility of maintaining the efficacy of magic weapons; he must fulfill all the obligations required by each of them. Among them there are true nyana, sometimes independent, sometimes a part of the great nyana. Mostly they are amulets or talismans whose virtue depends on certain rites or simply on the observance of certain interdicts.

596 Finally, the fa is the guardian of custom and family relics, which likewise have a religious basis since custom, after all, is the continuing will of the generations, the imperious mandate of the ancestors, the table of law of the manes. Any transgression of custom is certain to bring the worst disasters. The relics are ordinary or ceremonial objects left by the successive fa. Some of them are so strongly associated with the patriarchal office that on special occasions or in certain circumstances the fa is forced by custom to wear these objects impregnated with the virtue of the ancestors. The cap and weapons of Biton at Ségou were of this nature, and such is the case among the Massa-si.

596 Relations between members of the community. Theoretically, the powers of the fa over the members of the community are absolute. He can hire them out, offer them as security, sell them, and even put them to death (1). He also

1. Note how Ma-n-son got rid of some of his brothers.

has the right to use whatever belongs to them,(2) both persons

2. Ngolo sacrificed his son's son.

596 and property. On the other hand, he also has duties toward
●614 them, for it is the essence of the institution to support its members.

561 All the acts of the fa, even the arbitrary ones, are,
578 according to law, under the control of the senate. It should
596 not be forgotten that the members of the community are di-
614 vided into two hostile groups: that of the "elders," which includes the fa, and that of the "young masters." The fa could hardly [184] keep the common property all to himself, so he shares it more or less as he pleases, and naturally, the elders are among the most generously treated. The young men seldom get any such favors, hence their resentment against the elders, due largely to envy of their favored position.

596 It is customary for a fa when he becomes the head of a
614 patriarchy to leave the management of his own community to his eldest son (1). This separation of interests is essential in

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1. The eldest son, or better, the first-born son, thus occupies a privileged position, and in Kaarta he is usually provided with a white horse to make him conspicuous. See p. 122 about the death of 98 first-born sons mounted on white horses.

order to prevent the fa from despoiling the patriarchy to benefit his own community. The history of these countries shows how often this rule is broken by ambitious men who hope to profit by the general confusion to build up a considerable fortune. Among both the elders and the young men they find willing accomplices, and as their power increases, they extend their extortions. There are many signs, however, of the fragility of their despotism, which they themselves recognize. They usually, therefore, take pains to settle the question of succession in advance hoping to avoid the collapse of their achievements. Wasted effort! Custom, which they have ignored, regains its rights when they die and often does so during their lifetime. This is a logical explanation of the fact that

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614 most of the great empires have survived their founders for only a short time.

More often than not, a "young master" has a position in the community which is considerably less pleasant than that of a domestic slave who lives alongside him and ostensibly under his command. A domestic slave can escape or stir up all sorts of difficulties that result in the diminution of the patrimony. There is no such thing to be feared from a member of the community; should he be punished, banished, or leave, the common property does not suffer. If he goes away and is successful, he will not fail to share his good fortune with the community. Indeed, anyone who loses interest in the welfare of his community runs the risk of being cut off from it. He must actually live with the community; if not, he is treated as a dead member. [185] He must be present for anything that transpires. The chronicle of Ségou gives an example. Quarrels broke out among Ngolo's sons when he died. Nyana-n-koro, who had been favored by his father, thought that this affection designated him as the successor to the deceased. Ngolo, however, had expressly chosen Ma-n-son in conformity with custom. Nevertheless, confident of winning, Nyana-n-koro tried to oust Ma-n-son by force, but in vain. In the course of these fratricidal struggles, certain members of the community remained neutral, hoping in this way to retain the good will of the victor. They gained nothing, however, because Ma-n-son was the winner and turned against them. He sentenced his brothers Séri and Ba to a sort of exile from the community, giving each of them a token share of the estate and ordering them not to increase it.

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614 Since property is held in common, the fa is obliged to give some benefits to all the members of the community. This is why, when necessary, he provides the marriage payment that enables a young man to found a family; he ransoms persons who have been enslaved; he provides for the sick when their expenses are high; he pays civil, judicial, or other debts when the debtor is forced to pay and the community is responsible. These payments, however, which are made with the approval of the senate, are regarded as loans to the recipient with his consent, he is henceforth in debt to the community. He will not only have to repay

421 the loan but something in addition, and he will always show
596 his gratitude for it. If the repayment drags on and on, as
614 usually happens, the community does not withdraw his right to the debt, which is never lost; it watches for a turn for the better in the debtor's affairs, meddles in his business, and plagues his widows and children for all it can get from them after his death. The rapacity of the community uses the old debt as an excuse for seizing everything left by the debtor.

466 Every member of the community, strictly speaking, is
596 at the service of the community and must therefore cooperate
614 to assure its prosperity. If he cannot work himself, or does not wish to, in the fields, for instance, he must provide a substitute in the person of one of his children or his own slaves. To the extent that he cannot find the means to exempt himself, [186] he is treated as one of the "poor" and is forced to work.

166 It is easy to understand that the young men often leave to make their fortunes elsewhere in order to escape a power that is so suspicious, troublesome and all-pervading. Some of them never return, either because they have managed to create an independent life for themselves, or because they are more comfortable at a safe distance from their authoritarian elders. More often, however, the young man, having founded an independent family far away, keeps in close touch with his community and watches developments there in case he may one day be able to profit from them.

578 The young men who stay at home form a party of intrigue
561 which is forever at war with the fa and the senate. Their op-
885 position weakens, however, as they approach the age at which they too will participate in the faya to which they aspire. Gradually, as one changes from kamalen' to bina, he acquires the same niggling authoritarianism which then arouses the animosity of the new kamalen'-u.

562 In concluding this study of the members of the commun-
583 ity, the situation of girls remains to be discussed. Like the boys, they belong completely to the community, which, as a result, has the right to make as much profit out of them as possible. So, since exogamy is the rule, the community cedes the girl in usufruct to whoever pays the bride price, and because she will

421 424 596 614 Finally, the status of a community is, as it were, synthesized and symbolized by the "honorable name" (dyamu), by which this collectivity titles itself and which it considers one of its most precious possessions.

Agrarian usufruct. Ownership of land does not exist. 423 Each family has a right of use, uncertain in principle but permanent in fact, over the lands assigned to it in the domain of the genie-protector (nyana dugu-da-siri).

It may happen that a single family is the sole beneficiary of a given domain because it is the only one linked to the genie protecting the place.

More generally, various families are under the protection of the same local genie, whose domain in that case includes the parts exploited in common as well as the fields expressly assigned to individual families under its protection. The agrarian usufruct which is included as part of the community property exists with respect to these individual fields.

This usufruct differs from that recognized by our law. It is the dugu-tigi and his council who allot the common lands, and the process always involves wrangling and [187] deals. In principle, the plot assigned remains indefinitely with the family benefited if it is continuously farmed and an annual fee is paid. Following the land for several years is permitted. The family exploiting the land may use it in any way, and its right is as complete as possible, short only of alienating it. The family may lease, cede, or pawn its usufruct. If a transaction involves a foreigner, however, it may not be concluded without the consent of the dugu-tigi, who consults his council. In general, any action which might conceivably injure the welfare of the community as a whole must be submitted to the dugu-tigi for approval before being undertaken.

The usufruct comes to an end under the following circumstances: when a family permanently leaves the community governing the fields; when the dugu-tigi and his council decide to dispose of the land for reasons which they are not required to give; when a family gives the land up voluntarily or has been deprived of it because it has been used in a manner contrary to the interests of the agrarian community.

567 unlikely -- he may even own slaves himself and use them as substitutes.

Thus the relations between master and slave gradually become very different from what our European minds imagine. A master is bound to his wolo-so [193] by a thousand ties: he admits them to the cult; he marries their daughters; he circumcises their sons along with his own; and he allies himself with some of them by fraternization or an oath.

Even if he does not have such close contact, the wolo-so who is freed from labor, who perhaps lives at some distance or, if nearby, in virtual independence, is henceforth a dyongoro, that is, "freed." The link is not severed, and the freed man is a kind of relative. He is interested in everything that happens in his master's community and is present upon all important occasions, never coming with empty hands. Reciprocally, he is never treated like a stranger by the master. The master contributes to every event concerning him: he helps him get his sons married and established; on the occasion of the soli, he assembles his children along with his own, which gives them a degree of common solidarity.

The admission of the wolo-so to his master's community is shown publicly by the fact that the wolo-so bears the dyamu of his master.

It would be an exaggeration to claim that the house slave's situation is always so fortunate; it depends on many different factors (1).

> 1. A slave is seldom permitted to buy his freedom; the slave himself does not seek this redemption which would free only him and leave his family and most of his property in the hands of the master.

551 596 614 The dyamu. This is the name given to himself by the native, bestowed upon him by others, or inherited from his ancestors, but in any case one that has become such an honor that merely to pronounce it is enough to bring forth a show of homage toward one who bears it, for example, Kouloubali, Dyara, Dembélé, etc.

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This is because the dyamu in itself sums up the history of the community that bears it; it implies everything involving the ancestors, as well as the achievements of present members, their ignominies, and even their fraternal, conjugal, political, and supernatural alliances.

One might imagine that one or another of the characteristic aspects covered by the dyamu would serve to identify the bearers of the same name, but the Europeans who study the native milieu have long been accustomed to identifying those who bear the same dyamu by means of [194] their respective tne (interdicts), and the natives do the same (1).

1. When this was first being done, there was an error of interpretation and hasty generalization which falsified the results. The tne which accompanies the dyamu was made analogous with totem, and it was stated that the dyamu and the name of the tne object were one and the same. Careful study has established that there is nothing to the alleged correspondence.

For the Black, any of his fellows who bears the same dyamu as his and shares with him one or more tne is regarded as a relative, even though he may belong to a different people.

Among individuals of different peoples, certain dyamu, although dissimilar, are regarded as equivalent and are interchanged, because those who bear them have common tne (interdicts).

As a result of one of the alliances that will be described later under "Relations between Communities," the tne of one party henceforth become the tne of the other, and vice versa, and this leads to the equivalence of dyamu. Marriage sometimes has the same effect when the union is an important one, greatly desired, or even more, is the sort of marriage that forms indissoluble bonds and an unshakable solidarity between families.

429 A person who is away for a long or indefinite period [217] delegates the direction of the family community for as long as necessary to a friend or relative. This substitute, however, is expected to act only in accordance with the customary counsel and the family of the absent person.

[586] In case of divorce, the children always remain with the father. A divorced woman again comes under the guardianship of her own community.

768 When the mother dies, the father retains the administra-
429 tion of her property which belongs jointly to her children. If, however, one of her sons is married or of marriageable age and is competent, all such property is supposed to be handed over to him to administer in his capacity as fa of the uterine community.

When a father dies, his minor children are placed under the guardianship of the patriarch under whose authority the deceased was living. If he was independent, guardianship would be set up in accordance with his wishes which he would not have failed to make known.

In any event, if one of his sons is married or of marriageable age and sufficiently competent, he becomes fa of the familial community which gradually, as the younger sons grow up and establish families of their own, becomes a patriarchy such as we have described above.

[641] According to native law, deprivation of civil rights does not exist. In fact, however, persons who by reason of ill-health or senility are unable to comply with custom in carrying out their functions are supplanted by such persons as are designated by custom to replace them at the time of death.

596 Faya. The faya is the authority and power of the fa
●614 over all his dependents. It has the same character, differing only in extent, whether it concerns a familial or a patriarchal community.

Familial faya. Within the family, the fa theoretically has complete authority over everything that constitutes this community. It makes little difference whether he acts on his own initiative or whether he allows himself to be swayed by the

596 opinion of those around him, his intimates and friends. He
614 exercises the right of agrarian usufruct over the lands under cultivation, and he may dispose of movable property without restriction. As regards persons, his own issue [218] are at his mercy, and he profits from their labor. He can hire them out, put them up for security, sell them, and even put them to death. He has the right of conjugal usufruct over his wives, and his slaves are merely chattels.

Patriarchal faya. This differs in extent from the foregoing. Anything connected in whatever way to the patriarchal community itself or to the family communities under its authority comes under the patriarchal faya.

Though the maintenance of this power presents no problems in theory, practice is quite another matter.

The fact is that the fa of a familial community is completely subject to a patriarch only if, being connected through the male line, he has some property in the patriarchy or intends to claim rights in it.

If this is not the case, the familial fa acts as though he did not belong to the patriarchy, and the latter can only treat him accordingly. This is what happens when a "son" goes off, establishes himself far away, and prospers there by his own efforts and at his own risk. Breaking all agnatic ties, he in fact frees himself from any authority that his patriarchy might seek to impose upon him.

This has produced innumerable dissident branches which have the same dyamu but which can only hypothetically trace their descent through the males back to a common male ancestor.

428 Inheritance. It is necessary, first, to know whether the deceased was a fa or a fantan', that is, whether he exercised the authority of a fa or was under the authority of a fa.

Let us say the deceased was a fa.

In principle, if he was fa of a family, everything belonging to him remains undivided under the new faya of his eldest son.

If he was fa of a patriarchy, a new patriarch succeeds him.

It is unnecessary to belabor these points or the consequences of the variations in view of the details given above.

428 Now let us say the deceased was a fantan', that is, he did not exercise a faya. [219]

A son who dies before becoming fa rarely leaves any property. If he should by chance do so, such wealth theoretically belongs to the community of which he was a member. The disposition of property from special sources must be settled according to the nature of the source. Thus, property which the deceased may have inherited from his mother would go to his uterine heirs.

What has just been said of a son applies all the more to a daughter, since, after all, she is nothing more than a kind of property belonging to the community.

428 567 The most hapless fantan' is the slave. In principle, he could hardly be expected to leave an inheritance since even his own person does not belong to him. In fact, however, the situation is quite different. A slave generally does have some property and may even be very rich. His fa allows him the use of his property for his lifetime, and it is current practice for him to leave it likewise to his children. As a result, everything transpires just as though the deceased were a free man, and what we have said about other communities applies to this type of community which, strictly speaking, has only a kind of de facto existence. The action of custom, in freeing the slave, gives him access to the position of a free man without depriving him of what his fa has allowed him to enjoy. In the end, this enjoyment of use is gradually transformed and strengthened by inheritance until it is the equivalent of similar rights to property which are accorded to men born free.

596 ● 614 Order of succession. Patriarchal community. The fa is the eldest of the surviving males who are direct descendants in the male line of the fa who founded the community.

428 596 Familial community. 1. The eldest surviving son of the deceased; upon his death, succession follows the same pattern as for the patriarchal community.

614 If there are only daughters, the property is divided among them.

428 2. If there are no children, the collateral males and,
596 lacking them, the wives.
614 3. If there are no collateral relatives, the ascendants.
4. If there are no ascendants, the surviving spouse.
5. If there is no surviving spouse, escheat occurs: [220] the inheritance reverts to the head of the settlement, the dugutigi, when this settlement is independent; otherwise to the head of the clan, the fama.

596 The community and the individual. The result of the
614 foregoing is that the individual, whoever he may be and whatever his situation, has no value except as a member of a community (1); it is the community that exists and has an identity,

[567] 1. A slave has no rights because, as a person, he belongs to no community.

while the individual exists and is identified only through the community and for the community.

An individual who exists apart from any faya is, therefore, an anomaly, and this situation comes to an end as soon as the individual himself becomes fa.

596 There are cases, however, when an individual is put out
614 of his community because of his own action or because of circumstances, and extraordinary changes of status result.
626 Anyone driven from his community for bad conduct loses his rights to the faya in that community.

564 If his disqualification results from the practice of a trade
558 regarded as degrading, he falls into what the Bambara call nyama-ka-la and Europeans call "people of caste." Henceforth he is not only excluded from his community, but he lives apart from all persons not declassed; he is a free man of inferior standing. He usually lives under the protection of a community of persons not declassed, earning his living from it and deriving from it such consideration as may be sometimes given him.

564 Among the Bambara, the nyama-ka-la include: the
463 numu, blacksmiths, whose wives are usually potters; the loro, who work with copper; the garanke, who work leather; and the kule, who work with wood and are sometimes saddlers.

564 engage only in agriculture. Furthermore, casual or temporary practice, in one's own home, for instance, of one of the reputedly menial trades is not considered degrading.

567 Theoretically, enslavement does not exclude an individ-
516 ual from his own community nor in any way demean him in
614 relation to it (1); if he returns, he recovers his rights just as

1. For example, Déssé-Koro, taken in captivity to Ségou, returned to Kaarta where he exercised the faya of the Massa-si.

though he had never been away.

On the other hand, at the place where he is a slave, an individual belongs to no community (as a person), and that is why he has no rights and is treated as a chattel.

567 We have shown earlier how, aided by time and circumstances, a slave may manage to escape some of the limitations of his status, but strictly speaking, [222] he can never escape this status. If in fact, as the chronicle says of Ngolo Dyara, a slave succeeds in attaining a position whose importance would seem to obliterate the stigma of servitude, the blemish of slavery nevertheless remains indelible.

4. Relations between Communities

516 The true social unit is the community. Even when no
614 special organization links them, communities are often linked
621 by numerous bonds. This involves no distinction by race, incidentally, since more often than not ethnically diverse peoples live together in the same region.

These bonds between communities may be classified under two heads: kinship and alliance.

Kinship

[602] The influence of kinship is very extensive. Thus, a single patriarchal community includes the familial communities

596 of all the male members of the community, and agnate and
614 uterine communities coexist in each familial community.
621 Furthermore, every familial community automatically becomes
602 a patriarchal community upon the death of its head, and it is then composed of its own familial communities.

What actually happens, then, is that under the original patriarchal community are grouped an ever increasing number of other patriarchies or families, each of which includes its agnate or uterine communities. When the original patriarchy is an old one, it is obvious that a large number of persons will be living under its aegis, all of whom have dyamu and tne in common.

It may happen, however, that through time and a variety of circumstances branches become separated from the trunk, and to mark their new status, to perpetuate the memorable achievement of their founder, some of these groups have adopted a special dyamu and particular tne. At first the new dyamu is simply added to the original one, but later on the new one comes to be the only one used. However that may be, the principal characteristics [223] of the original community still persist, with a few new traits merely superimposed.

Since every secondary community in turn generates like communities, it goes without saying that the communities most distant from the original one have only a few traits in common with it, but their kinship never becomes extinct.

What are the effects of this kinship? On the one hand, it requires all concerned to observe their common duties to the community: in particular to respect ancestral traditions relative to the cult; to give mutual aid; to recognize the authority of the current fa who, for his part, is obliged to protect all his relatives, no matter how remote the connection.

As far as outsiders are concerned, kinship requires everyone to respect all pacts between communities. One can often observe fidelity to these alliances which may be hundreds of years old. If by chance people who have previously never seen each other learn of their respective dyamu and the attendant obligations, they will at once assume the reciprocal obligations contracted by their ancestors.

Alliance

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The types of alliance between communities appear to differ widely, but in actual fact all alliances are based on a religious or magic rite and, more generally, on an oath.

Four forms of alliance particularly deserve attention: the tne or interdict, the oath, marriage, and the common cult.

I. The tne. The native regards the invisible world as a duplicate of the visible world, complete with communities. He carries the analogy even to those things which we call inanimate objects. That is why, when a native binds himself to an interdict, he is not promising to respect such and such a person or thing but, rather, the community of which he believes the person or thing to be a representative. Besides, just as the interdict applies to the whole community to which the object of the interdict belongs, it also binds all the members of the community whose fa instituted it. [224]

The basis of the alliance is the oath of the fa, any infraction of which automatically brings the most dreadful calamities upon the guilty party. It is like a sacrament, which the descendants of the fa must respect in infinitum.

The chronicle of Ségou shows us how such an oath happens to be made. Upon reaching the Niger, and having no means of crossing it, Ntchi in his peril called upon his ancestors for help. His prayer was answered: a poyon' appeared and ferried him and his people to the opposite shore. In gratitude for this service, Ntchi swore that the fish would henceforth be sacred to him and to his descendants. By this act, all poyon' became tne for Ntchi and his descendants, although this does not mean that there was a cult of the fish. It was a kind of alliance or covenant, analogous to one between human communities and with similar effects; it entailed some sort of reciprocal brotherly mutual aid. In practice, a Kouloubali descended from Ntchi must never, under any circumstances whatsoever, voluntarily harm a poyon', his tne, on pain of the most disastrous consequences. If he has done so inadvertently, he can atone with sacrifices or appropriate penance, which his own intuition or a diviner suggests. He must always, in so far as the need arises,

596 assist his tne, while showing it the greatest respect. The mysti-
614 cal basis of this alliance sometimes causes the native to behave
621 in a particular way toward his tne: he will not look straight at
784 it; he will not touch it, unless absolutely forced to do so, and then he will apologize and ask forgiveness.

Anything may be the object of a tne, but there is probably not a single Bambara family which does not have some animal as tne. Expressions which the natives in general and the Bambara in particular use to make foreigners understand their relations with this animal tne have made many Europeans think that the native regards the animal as a relative in the literal sense of the word. This is not the case, as we have just seen, and consequently Bambara totem is a purely European invention (1). [225]

1. It should be understood that the tne has many sources besides one mentioned here, which is the only one pertinent to this chapter. Thus, Bala refused to pronounce any word having the syllable da (p.); Sounsan abstained from the kulé (p. , footnote 1).

596 II. The oath. In native society, a man who is ambitious
614 or merely anxious to establish a powerful community can do so
621 only with the support of faithful allies. Massa and Biton not only
608 succeeded in dominating their young companions, but they also bound them closely through the oath and the cult.

Undoubtedly all the founders of powerful communities have not proceeded in exactly the same way, but all of them have employed analogous methods. An isolated individual can accomplish nothing in this social milieu where everything rests on these strongly organized collectivities, the communities. Any Bambara eager for well-being and peace will seek out and attach himself to a "powerful protector" (dyigi seme) capable of providing him with this security, even if it means the loss of his own

596 freedom. That is why any important fa is invariably surrounded
614 by a small group of intimates who are bound to his fate, often
621 by a reciprocal agreement based on an oath.
608 One of these sacramental alliances is particularly solemn; its purpose is to create a kind of kinship analogous to that which links blood brothers. There is always a profound difference between natural and contractual brotherhood, since the former exists and produces its effects independently of the will of those involved, whereas the latter exists and is valid only within the limits agreed upon by the contracting parties (1).

1. It should be noted that fraternization in its symbolic form has a necessary consequence which is not obligatory for other types of alliance by oath: it obligates the descendants of the contracting parties just as much as those undertaking the contract.

For a pact of brotherhood (dyonge) (2), the contracting

2. This term unquestionably derives from the verb siri, "to link, to unite."

parties, whether two or several, proceed as they see fit, either in public or privately in the presence of only close relatives and intimates. Each party to the agreement pricks his forearm and extracts a few drops of blood. The blood thus obtained is mixed with a small quantity of goat's milk in a receptacle. Calling upon the ancestors or some god chosen for the occasion to bear witness, each party in turn promises with a solemn oath to consider the others as his brothers. At the same time, he repeats the [226] conditions of the pact and finally sips some of the liquid.

This is the closest alliance that two Bombara can contract (1). Among other things, it forbids one to marry women

1. Blood-brotherhood was contracted

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between Deni-ba Bo for the Massa-si of Kaarta and Suleyman Ba for the people of Fouta.

belonging to the other's community, at least virgins or women reputed to be such. This is because a first sexual contact is likely to result in some flow of blood, and brotherhood imposes a terrible punishment on anyone who sheds the blood of a blood-brother or one of his people. As is apparent, the obligation undertaken by the contracting parties holds for all their descendants, regardless of sex and in infinitum. Henceforth there is a very close solidarity between the two communities, who are so bound to mutual aid that, in practice, anything (including lies, slander, and perjury) is permissible to overcome a common enemy or, in any event, to help the ally in trouble.

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In place of the brotherhood oath, many other forms of oath can be used. Thus, the chronicles tell of Sounsan and Fa Siné forming an alliance with an oath which was undoubtedly binding, because the anvil on which it was sworn was afterwards cast into a well. Nko, Sounsan's god, received the oath under which the "young men" who were Massa's companions allied themselves to the latter's fate. At Ségou, the tondyon' likewise swore loyalty on the idols.

These sacramental agreements are endlessly varied, but they bind the parties only under the stipulated conditions, especially as regards the respective communities of the fa who take the oath.

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III. Marriage. There is no better way for a Bambara to show his attachment to someone whose alliance or friendship he desires than by giving him as a wife one of the girls of his own community and providing her with a generous dowry. This is one of the most solemn forms of alliance between communities (2).

2. People united by marriage are called furu-nyuan' (spouses) and biran' (allies).

596 This conjugal union differs clearly from [227] ordinary
614 forms of marriage. In view of the fact that the husband gets a
621 wife without paying a bride price for her, the wife is not given
583 in usufruct, and therefore she must be treated with the greatest consideration or she may be taken back. The situation can only be normalized if the husband is rich enough to present to the donor a gift equal to or preferably, if possible, greater than the dowry brought by the wife, or he may give a similar gift to the wife (1).

1. Such property is the wife's paraphernalia.

In these situations also, the procedure varies a great deal. The donor may offer a girl from another community and provide her with a dowry. This is what Biton did in order to bind Ngolo to him: Biton gave him a girl designated by the marabouts as one of the elect, and he also provided the girl with a rich dowry.

The significance of such alliances can be estimated only when one has some knowledge of the intentions of the parties involved, especially those of the donor. We shall see one important type in the chapter on Islam, the marriage of Allah.

IV. The common cult (2). The territorial community.

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2. Communities may be united under the protection of the same god. Here we shall study only their union under the protection of the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-siri). Other common cults will be studied in the following chapter, "Brotherhoods."

In the mind of the Bambara, the earth, together with everything in it, is the property of the spirits. As a result, no one may make use of it or presume to settle on or cultivate an unused field without first going through certain ceremonies.

For this purpose, either on his own responsibility or, more often, with the aid of "the one who knows" (don-na-ba), a

631 Bambara, with whom we are here concerned. Each writer, however, uses these terms to refer to an ill-defined type of authority, sometimes without even attempting a critical comparison with similar institutions in our own countries.

This uncertainty is accompanied by other such doubtful similarities, which result in confused conceptions. Is it not common to speak of feudalism, of a feudal system, to describe the kind of hierarchy among various native chiefs? In the Sudan, however, there is no connection between man and the land comparable to that which was the basis of the feudal system. Indeed, no such meaning is possible, since the Sudanese does not recognize any right of ownership of land. Therefore, political ties between native chiefs are never based on land; how then can one speak of a feudal system?

614 As a matter of fact, the social unit is the community based on the family; it develops into a patriarchy and expands into a tribe and a people. Its members are united by blood ties, which are confirmed by the ancestor cult.[288]

Since they are proud and jealous of their freedom, communities seek to remain independent. Their relationships, however, determined especially the occupation and exploitation of a common territory, force them to give up this independence, and joining together in the same cult, the sign of their spiritual solidarity, they form a dugu (1).

1. This word is not without ambiguity. On the one hand, it means "that which is below," hence, "the soil"; on the other hand, it means "place," "residence," or "at the home of." It is understood to mean "territory" or "country" occupied by a human collectivity, and by an easily understandable deviation, it likewise designates the organization which governs this collectivity in relation to this territory.

614 The dugu have definite territorial domains, and they, too, prefer to live without the subordination of any one of them to the others. There are relationships between some of them, such as some being offshoots of others and, due to proximity, many matrimonial unions have bound them together.

Unavoidable necessity also often forces the dugu to form leagues, coalitions, or more often associations called kafu' (literally, "union"). Depending on the circumstances, a chief is elected by the association or he usurps the authority over it. This sometimes results in the creation of a political or administrative organization. The Ségala area, also called Sénébala, is an example. "It has a local history of several centuries, hereditary chiefs of several dynasties, social and matrimonial bonds and customary institutions which have persisted for generations; it is a nation and a fatherland" (2).

2. In Marty, Etudes sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan [Studies on Islam and the Tribes of the Sudan], Vol. 4, p. 105.

614 It also may happen that someone who becomes a chief will be so enamored with the exercise and the profits of power that with the support of his followers -- relatives or others -- he will manage to retain permanent control. This association is what we here call a clan; the Bambara designate it by the word ton', applicable to any association.

As an organism of authority, this clan may be defined as an oligarchic government founded for the sole purpose of subjugating, by any means, the individuals it can reach for the sake of exploiting them. Those who are enfeoffed to this government are called "the people of So-and-So" or "the people of such and such place" by the Bambara, as by other natives, [289] for example: the Massa-si-u (1),

1. From another point of view, Massa-si-u means "descendants of Massa," and hence, "the tribe of Massa."

614 631 "the people (of the clan) of Massa"; the Segu-n-ka-u (2),

> 2. From another point of view, Segu-n-ka-u means "the people of the country of Ségou."

"the people (of the clan) of Ségou."

104 128 Since we are always obsessed by our own system of organization, these terms appear in our writings as village (dugu), canton or province (kafu), and empire (ton', which is a clan).

Because of the convenience of expressions that are familiar to us, we shall use this terminology in this study, and it seems essential to define briefly the value of these terms in native society in order to avoid ambiguity which, to say the least, gives rise to distorted delusions.

173 563 631 In Kaarta and the Ségou country before the time of the two great clans whose history we have given and whose development and operation we are about to describe, there were dugu which usually had no connections or at most were joined in some ephemeral kafu. These kafu were composed of a majority of Bambara mixed with Soninké and people of other races. The Soninké dugu were noted for their prosperity, sometimes even wealth, and this gave them a degree of pre-eminence over the Bambara dugu. This prosperity rested on the labor of a slave population that the Soninké had managed to acquire for the most part by commercial dealings.

This de facto hegemony usually had no corresponding political or administrative organization; its only outward sign was the scorn with which the Soninké regarded the less fortunate Bambara and, conversely, the sullen hostility of the Bambara toward the rich Marka (as they called the Soninké). As a consequence, local quarrels broke out from time to time which sometimes developed into bloody conflicts. The early history of the Massa-si clan is a good example of this state of affairs, to judge by the record in the chronicle cited above.

173 631 The Ségou-Kaarta regions, under the authority of Mandé and Songhaï clans, were in this state, in semiobscurity because they were outside the zone of direct administration by these clans.

*173 Henceforth, the fama in the furu-ba was no more than primus inter pares, just like the ton'-tigi in the old fla-n-ton', taking into consideration the evolution by which the furu-ba developed from the fla-n-ton'.

Ngolo Dyara succeeded only in making the office of fama, thus understood, hereditary for his descendants, just as had been done with many positions of dyon'-kuntigi before his time.

This progressive consolidation of an ever increasing number of high offices and the de facto independence regained by most of the members of the clan resulted in the formation of a society whose members took pride in their ton'-dyon' origins, considered themselves free, and even regarded themselves as free men of rank. This is perhaps the essential role of slavery in these areas, as a channel of social renovation and ethnic fusion.

It is appropriate to close this survey by an analysis of the various components of the clan and an explanation of their functions.

Furu-ba dyon' and Ton'-dyon'

•614 567 In the course of time, the organization and function of the furu-ba created by Mamari underwent various modifications.

The essential element of the clan is the ton'-dyon', because after all everything depends on it. We have learned the origin of the ton'-dyon' above. The number of slaves of the furu-ba was increased by the many captives taken in the course of raids, pillaging, and warfare, but the ton'-dyon' is an aristocracy within the furu-ba-dyon' by virtue of seniority and also because some of the characteristics [300] of free men have somehow survived in those of the ton'-dyon' who were originally ton'-den'.

Undoubtedly one of the causes of the unrest that always stirs up the furu-ba is this deep yearning everyone has for freedom. They do not know how to attain it, however, first because they are dominated by an ancient atavism for servitude that burdens all the Sudanese, and also because each man who desires freedom for himself intends to use it to enslave his brothers. These are the confused feelings that give such an equivocal aspect to all the events related in the chronicle.

•614 567 The ton'-dyon' of the furu-ba is a kind of person of caste: he cannot cease to be ton'-dyon', and his children will live and die as ton'-dyon'. He is subject to the despotic authority of the fama. For a free man, it is certainly a fall to become a ton'-dyon', but for a slave, on the contrary, it is an improvement in status. Among the ton'-dyon' there are all sorts of people; this was the case in the beginning and has continued to be so as time passed. Although slaves obtained from armed forays were an [727] important element in the totality of the ton'-dyon', there were undoubtedly many men, free but poor, who were glad to join the ton'-dyon' so as to protect themselves from the depredations of these hardly commendable persons and also to gain the right of using the same procedures themselves.

Among the ton'-dyon', therefore, there are people of all races and all conditions; indeed, this is so true that all the dyamu are mingled under this common label.

Within the furu-ba, the ton'-dyon' formed a category apart and always retained the prerogatives which in native society accompany seniority. The ton'-dyon' were the "elders." Prisoners reduced to slavery formed the furu-ba-dyon', properly speaking, and they were grouped in series, each taking its origin from the fama who organized it. There they followed the usual path. Barring favorable circumstances which might allow them to escape the wretchedness of the early days of captivity, they started out as members of the gang of slaves-of-all-work, often considered as a kind of medium of exchange and for that reason called san'-dyon'-u (slaves of exchange). Once they were adopted by a community, a woman acquired the status [301] of wolo-so when she bore a child, while a man might achieve comparable status by gaining the confidence of his masters.

The wolo-so became a dyongoron when he was in a position to send his children to work in his place and to pay an annual fee.

Once he reached the status of wolo-so, the slave became, in actual fact, a person of caste. In principle, he could not be sold, he had the right of ownership, and he could leave property to his children. Indeed, he was often better off than a man who was free but poor.

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The status of this caste-slave carried over to his descendants ad infinitum, even in the case of those persons who rose to the highest positions. Thus, the Dyara of the family of Ngolo Dyara kept the stigma attached to the servile status of their ancestor (1). In practice, the wishes of an all-powerful master

1. See Raffenel, Vol. 1, p. 371.

could change the status of those under his authority since, as we have seen, the fa made the law. However, this arbitrary will did not leave a man without recourse, as we saw in the chronicle in the case of the aforesaid Ngolo in his relations with Mamari. If one could appeal to the good offices of someone close to the fa, it was often possible to make him change his mind.

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The furu-ba dyon' (ton'-dyon' or furu-ba dyon', properly speaking) were under the orders of "chiefs of slaves" (dyon'-kuntigi-u). There are supposed to have been 120 of these chiefdoms under Ma-n-son, according to the words attributed to Tonmassa in the chronicle. According to the same source, the number rose to 140, and then Ma-n-son reduced the number to 60 hereditary posts with authority over a varying number of furu-ba dyon' who were scattered about in the various regions subject to the clan, the whole subservient to the decision of the fama. The chronicle shows us how the fama established or broke up these chiefdoms for the greatest variety of reasons. Whenever he had an enemy who needed watching, an attack to be prepared, a country to be exploited, or a service to be organized, he conscripted men wherever he liked, ordered whole populations to move, and appointed a chief to take command of the enterprise and to carry out his orders, whenever and however he wished.

Among the dyon'-kuntigi there was a hierarchy [302] based on seniority theoretically and also on the importance of the duties; as a result, some of them were great chiefs. One of these, called the ton'-masa, came to be the supreme chief over the ton'-dyon in particular and all the furu-ba dyon' in general. In the fla-n-ton' the ton'-masa had the duty of convening the ton'-den' and of watching the ton'-dyon' to see that they

614 performed the work ordered by the ton'-tigi. The ton'-masa had
631 the same duties in the furu-ba: he made sure that the furu-ba dyon' executed the orders of the fama while acting as intermediary of the dyon'-kuntigi. Since, in short, he represented all the furu-ba dyon', his office gradually tended to put him in opposition to the fama. In the last analysis, what can a fama accomplish if he is opposed by a ton'-masa with all the force of the furu-ba dyon' behind him? That is why Mamari thought he would be able to rely on the devotion of the holder of this high office if he chose him, not from among the furu-ba dyon', but from among his personal slaves. He bought a slave and made him a ton'-masa.

*173 The furu-ba dyon' were first used, though not exclusively
614 as might be thought, for armed forays, variable in scope, from
631 which everyone profited: Mamari, first of all, by increasing prestige and by extending the areas under his sway; the furu-ba dyon', and Mamari too, by adding to their fortunes. The sons of Mamari, obviously anxious to perpetuate their acquired position and not run the risks of brigandage, decided to turn the activity of the furu-ba dyon' toward agriculture. This new orientation gave rise to a crisis, since it was not at all to the taste of one faction which included a large number of furu-ba dyon'; hence there arose internal quarrels, in which one episode was the murder of Dé-koro.

It was during these disturbances that many of the ton'-dyon' and dyon'-kuntigi conceived the idea of dropping out of sight to live independently on the proceeds of the property of the furu-ba entrusted to their case. Successive fama naturally tried, by terrible examples, to bring the rebels to terms, but they succeeded only temporarily by means of force, and when their power declined, these usurpations multiplied. Some of them were sanctioned definitively by the hereditary rights accorded to the 60 posts. [303]

The Fama

614 The second element in the clan was the power of direction, organization, and surveillance, and the holder of this power

614 was called fama (1) (lord).

1. Etymologically, fama or fa-ma, "the powerful," from fa, "power, authority."

Mamari played a dual role: fa of his patriarchal community and at the same time fama of the clan. His successors followed the same practice. However, in order that his duties as fama may be carried out honestly, custom requires the incumbent to turn over the authority and the property of his patriarchal community to his eventual successor, thus retaining a merely honorary fa-ya, so as to avoid confusion whose origin and consequences are easy to imagine.

421 614 In reality, all the property of the furu-ba which the fama held for his use and exploitation always belonged to the clan, and consequently, in principle, was supposed to profit only the clan. When the fama retained his duties as fa, the property of the furu-ba and that of the patriarchal community were likely to be inextricably intermingled, and in the process a considerable fortune would be built up for the community. This wealth, dishonestly acquired, so aroused envy and criticism among the furu-ba dyon' that many of them tried -- sometimes successfully -- to enrich themselves in no less questionable a manner and also sought to lay hands on the estate of the fama because of the clan property taken into it.

In the last analysis, indeed, the only reason for belonging to a clan -- and this is its essential trait in common with the fla-n-ton' -- the possibility of enriching oneself in every way possible; each member of the clan hopes to appropriate as much of the property as possible. On the other hand, each member tries to prevent his brothers from doing likewise, on the pretext of that equality which legally is the basis of the relations between clan members. This hypocrisy dominates the whole life of the clan. It inspires all the acts of the fama in the course of his duties, and it also animates each furu-ba dyon' to such a degree that every one of them aspires to become fama. [304]

614 The fama receives his powers by election, the form of which has changed very little since Mamari's time.

614 *173 Mamari had been elected by the ton'-den'; by means of successive usurpations, whose progress we have shown, he achieved a kind of despotism whose entire gain he was unable to hand down to his descendants, in spite of his wishes.

For his descendants, election followed their installation in office by the ton'-masa, who at the same time publicly announced the assent of the furu-ba-dyon' by a symbolic gesture in which he presented himself to the new fama wearing a loincloth around his neck and put its two ends into the hands of the fama. Under the protection of the deity called ba Kongo-ba, which Mamari had bought in Bendougou, an oath was taken which formed an unbreakable bond between the two elements of the clan.

The election of Tonmassa Dembélé as fama was the result of discussions following the coup d'état which he himself carried out, and it is probable that this election, too, was followed by an oath of loyalty on the part of the dyon'-kuntigi in one or another of the ways already described.

In the case of the successors of Tonmassa Dembélé, the choice of a new chief was preceded by gatherings at which it was announced that the place was vacant and open to the person who could take over Mamari's bow and quiver. Then the election was held, and it was followed by a ritual banquet.

614 *173 782 [776] For this banquet, an ox and a slave were ritually slaughtered in the hut used as a temple for ba Kongo-ba (1), to whom the victims were sacrificed. The corpses were then cut into pieces, cooked together, and stirred frequently to make sure that they would be well mixed. A part of this macabre dish was served in the same hut and in the same gourd to the

1. A literal translation of the name was given to me, "Mother of the Great Bush," wherein "mother" is equivalent to goddess." There is an allusion to the ceremony described here in the journal of Isaac (second voyage of Mungo Park), which uses the name Kogno-ba, a variant of Kongo-ba.

•614 dyon'-kuntigi who had acted as electors. When it was time to
782 eat, they squatted on the ground around the gourd with their
*173 backs to it, and in this position and without turning their heads to make a choice, [305] they dipped into the dish and took a piece which might be animal or human. This meal constituted a communion by which those partaking of it were so closely linked that ba Kongo-ba was supposed to kill any one of them who should commit perjury by failing in the loyalty he owed to the man elected.

614 The choice made was then definitive, and the man elected
*173 was put through a test intended to indicate the length of his reign. To make this test, the newly elected chief's throat was wrapped in one of the cotton bands used to make native loincloths; two of the bystanders pulled the two ends in opposite directions while the victim feverishly plunged his hands into a gourd containing a mixture of small pebbles and ground baobab leaves. The number of pebbles he managed to pick out in one try was the number of years in his reign. When this number of years had passed, the fama was strangled with the strip of cotton. If his rule had been popular, however, he was left in office until the first complaint was lodged against him.

Such is the tradition. Though it is acceptable in essentials, it is less so in certain details when comparison is made with the chronicle which makes no reference to this uniform death by strangulation or to determining in advance the length of the reign.

One thing that is certain is the oath of loyalty which followed every election and which was also often demanded by the fama during the course of his reign. This oath unquestionably had a sacramental form, characterized by a communion under the patronage of the idol. What the chronicle has to say about the election of Ngolo Dyara shows that the man elected was also required to participate in the oath, thus making it reciprocal.
[661] Ngolo managed to avoid taking the oath, and so his electors bore the whole burden of it; this is one of the means by which despots of all lands pave the way for their tyranny.

Relations between the Elements of the Clan

614 596 A study of the clan of Ségou is fortunately clarified by comparison with the organizations which we have discussed earlier: communities and brotherhoods. [306]

The influence of the community and the brotherhood on the clan is clearly shown by the two traits which reveal the consistent effort made by the fama to fuse the clan with his own patriarchy. First, there is the connection of the important ton'-dyon' chiefs and, through them, of all of the furu-dyon' to the fama. This is achieved by placing each of these dyon'-kuntigi under the patronage of an influential member of that patriarchy. Under Mamari and Ngolo, for instance, each of these dyon'-kuntigi was attached to the mother, wife, son, or brother of the fama. The ton'-masa himself asked to be put under the protection of Bakari, son of Mamari.

794 From another viewpoint, the liaison between the clan and the patriarchy of the fama is made even closer by the participation of the ton'-dyon' in the personal cults of Mamari. Some of them were leading officients of the cults; it was precisely this circumstance that enabled Ngolo to dominate his companions.

It is therefore not too rash to state that under these conditions the clan is merely a kind of extension of the patriarchy of the fama. Besides, the ton'-dyon' always made a point of the bonds which in so many ways linked them to Mamari and which established a real brotherhood between them. That is why, first of all, their cult honored Mamari as though he were an ancestor. Secondly, it was the reason for the mode of succession which was imposed during periods of anarchy, bringing to power the man longest in Mamari's service. Finally, for the same reason, when the fama dies, the ceremonies are exactly like those for a patriarch.

614 There is another consequence: the prosperity, the power, and even the existence of the clan depend essentially on the personal qualities of the fama. When he is equal to the task, the clan is rich and powerful. If he lacks authority or is unable to assign each member a position and a role and keep him there, opposition will at once arise. By its very nature, such opposition inevitably separates the elements that go to make up the clan,

614 and from that moment on everyone seeks to enjoy his freedom and his property for his own profit. The end result is complete disorganization, and only the emergence of a new and enterprising despot can stop it.

614 575 Fundamentally -- and this is a new aspect of the question -- the clan retains the ineradicable imprint of the fla-n-ton' from which it took its origin. The aim has not changed: to assure to each member the [307] largest possible number of those material satisfactions which are so dear to the Bambara. The means likewise remain the same: in spite of appearances to the contrary, it is a type of solidarity based on a strictly egalitarian communalism (1).

1. The innate penchant of the Black for this sort of egalitarian justice is affirmed by legendary episodes wherein an individual is honored and proclaimed chief because he was able to make strictly equal shares. Cf. the legend of Ndyadyane Ndyaye, in Légendes et coutumes sénégalaises [Senegalese Legends and Customs] by Henri Gaden, and the Djide of Djenné, in Contes du Sénégal et du Niger [Tales of the Senegal and Niger] by Zeltner.

[579] The resources of the clan are in every respect analogous to those of the fla-n-ton. Just as the latter profited from the thievery, banditry, and raids of its members, so the clan derives its main resources from successful raids and pillage.

The fla-n-ton' provided for its drinking bouts by means of the di-songo and the crops of its ton'-den' or ton'-dyon'. In the clan, the di-songo persisted for a time and then was replaced by a similar fee, the nyon'-dyu. The work required of the ton'-dyon' was minimal at first during the period of active warfare, but then Dékoro peremptorily sent them into agriculture. Ultimately the furu-ba dyon' came to be primarily agriculturalists.

The foodstuffs of the fla-n-ton' were equally distributed among the ton'-den' by the dyala-tige, under the direction of the ton'-tigi. Within the clan, property is also held in common and

614 Within the clan, property is also held in common and
575 administered by the fama who distributes it among the dyon'-
[421] kuntigi. The latter, in turn, make a further distribution as it is needed.

In the fla-n-ton' the important thing was provisions, material well-being. The same thing is true in the clan. The ton'-dyon' are interested in the profit to be derived from the association, and their feeling for the state is embodied in a very prosaic word, to-da, literally, "the pot of mush." Indeed, this is the principal item on the menue of any fraternal feast of the fla-n-ton'.

614 The property of the clan, as of the fla-n-ton', is theo-
421 retically jointly held by all the members, but since there is a large amount of it, some sort of sharing is necessary, first to consume it and then to reward zeal and fidelity and to encourage emulation and devotion. As a result, the basic egalitarianism is altered. From the clan's beginning it was conceded that a substantial part of the wealth should go to those [308] who had done most to acquire it. Thus, the leader of an expedition had a prior right because of his "luck," and he and his men further received the wherewithal "to repair the rents in their shirts," i.e., to indemnify them for damages suffered during the expedition.

[127] Each warrior kept his own loot, except for unusually valuable things which went to the clan and therefore to the fama who represented it. The part of the loot not taken by individuals was distributed by the fama after abstracting the best and largest part of it for himself.

Strictly speaking, no one actually owned any of this wealth, since all of them, even the fama, merely held it on very precarious terms. Through the caprice of the clan, anyone could
[562] have everything taken away, and this applied to persons as well as to things, because the wives and children of the ton'-dyon' were, like himself, the "chattels" of the clan.

The passage of time softened the outward form of these principles; barring abuse or notorious misconduct, each individual had indefinite use of what was allotted to him and handed it on to his descendants. This usufruct, incidentally, was broader than that of our law. In addition, Mamari arrogated to himself a kind of eminent right: he appointed himself -- through usurpation facilitated by his power -- the dispenser of offices and wealth

614 and kept considerable property for himself. For their part, the
421 ton'-dyon', pleased with their lot, carefully kept out of sight so as to be able to enjoy what they had been given and what they had managed to add to it.

These usurpations tended to become stabilized through inheritance, although not without dreadful disturbances.

614 After Mamari, the office of fama was handed down within
*173 his family until the day when the assembly of the ton'-dyon', dissatisfied with Dékoro's regime, decided to "change the seed," a quaint metaphor for the clan's determination to have a more amenable fama.

The ease with which Dékoro was eliminated (and others after him) also shows that the fama was, and after all could only be, what the ton'-dyon' allowed him to be. This makes it clear that the spirit [309] of the fla-n-ton' never died; the fama merely appeared to be more than primus inter pares at times when his personal influence temporarily made him master of the situation.

At such times, then, he may have governed without the opposition of the majority, but such a period of dominance has always been personal and temporary. In reality, dissension was
578 ever present and was made manifest in fratricidal quarrels, during which the fama seemed to be principally concerned with gratifying personal grudges.

The chronicle shows us that the fama was at the mercy of the ton'-dyon'; without them he could do nothing. The Monday and Thursday meetings, which were a condition of his authority, continued for a long period of time. In any event, this assembly (furu-ba) was the whole of the clan. In ordinary times, the assembly was stimulated by the pleasure of drinking the beer which the fama, like the ton'-tigi before him, always provided. Worship of the clan idols was also the occasion for some of these meetings, accompanied by eating and drinking. The fama invariably made every effort to use these gatherings, usually disorganized, to further his own interests as well as those of the clan.

When Mamari's authority was well established, these meetings no longer played any deliberative or even consultative role, except in the gravest circumstances when the very existence of the clan was at stake. It was logical that the council of the

614 *173 dyon'-kuntigi should replace them; the dyon'-kuntigi always exercised an influence over the ton'-dyon' for whom they acted as spokesmen. Besides it was easy to convene the dyon'-kuntigi, and as their experience increased, they came to be competent and tried collaborators for the fama.

As time went on, however, the council was neglected. The extension of the to-da kept the important dyon'-kuntigi away from Ségou, and as a result the fama became increasingly despotic. He was always sensitive, however, to the influence of his immediate circle, that is, the people of his house (his mother, wives, children, brothers, and other relatives) and [567] especially his familiars (1). The latter constituted a kind of

1. So it was that in his fratricidal quarrel with Nyana-n-Koro, it is clearly apparent that Ma-n-son was guided by the shrewd suggestions of Nzan-fato; in his quarrel with Souleyman, his intimates were his advisers.

privy council in which the leader of the slaves, whether [310] or not he belonged to the ton'-dyon', played an important role. Ordinarily these familiars were of lowly birth: people of caste or domestic servants in the house of the fama. Deeply involved in their master's life, they were at the root of the intrigues surrounding him.

The fama realized that his authority was deprived of its strength when he lost contact with the ton'-dyon', because a clan languishes almost to the point of extinction when those who compose it lose touch with one another. Therefore, the fama would convene the assembly, not, as in the past, in order to learn its wishes, but rather to request or even require from it a solemn affirmation of loyalty before the idols. In any case, the assembly always met at least once a year to renew the oath of religious faith and to admit the "young men."

[578] The assembly took an effective role only at the election of a new fama, and it is plain that over the years this power of

614 *173 578 consultation likewise underwent changes. In the beginning there was no great amount of dissension within the furu-ba, but gradually, as the importance of the clan grew and the wealth of influential members increased, divergent opinions arose, held by strong and determined partisans. Then the dyon'-kuntigi were opposed among themselves, and the recurrent periods of anarchy bear witness to the consequences of these internal quarrels.

Organization of the Clan

614 721 The army. The office of fama is dominated by the need to ensure the prosperity of the clan since, in theory, the clan's only reason for existence is that of procuring for its members as many material satisfactions as possible.

The usual way to make a fortune among these people was through armed pillage. When a fama was elected, the bow and quiver symbolized the clan's activity, and according to the reasoning of Kanou-ba-nyouma, it was essential that the arrows should hit someone. Thus, it was necessary to go to war. That was the way to acquire slaves, by means of which the great -- and everyone aspired to be such -- satisfied their desires. That is why the essential organization in the clan was the armed force. [311]

614 701 This organization was based on the distribution of the slaves among chiefdoms (dyon'-kuntigi-ya). Observed as a whole, the army was composed of a certain number of sections called sen' (literally, "foot"). This was not a specific unit, but merely the name used to designate an organized group under the leadership of a chief. Each sen' had a variable number of men. The bolo (literally, "arm") was a "band" made up of a likewise variable number of sen' and commanded by an important chief.

614 726 When the army was drawn up for battle, it faced the enemy with a central mass called disi (literally, "chest") made up of the corps of sofa, flanked on the right and the left by bolo called, respectively, kini-n-bolo (right arm) and numa-n-bolo (left arm) (1). Each of these bolo were made up of furu-ba dyon'

1. Note this anthropomorphism applied to the army, which thus included head, arm, feet, chest.

614 surrounded by ton'-dyon'. Behind the disi there was a special
726 reserve composed only of ton'-dyon'; this was the ton'-koro-bolo.

The fama himself designated the leader (keli-tigi) of all
614 the expeditions of war. This might be one of the dyon'-kuntigi or
701 some member of the community of the fama; sometimes the fama himself might take command.

The personal protection of the fama was the duty of the corps of sofa. In principle, considering the etymology of the name, the sofa were supposed to take care of the horses; this does not mean that they were necessarily horsemen or even grooms. The youngest served as pages and sometimes as grooms; the older ones were confidential aides to whom the fama entrusted missions. The sofa constituted one part -- and by no means the least important -- of what might be called the household of the fama: an assemblage of persons employed for various duties under the immediate authority of the fama.

[727] They were recruited from young prisoners taken in raids and other operations of war.

When the fama led an expedition which was engaged for some time or when he took part in some important affair, he liked to arrange and to preside over the soli of the boys of the conquered people and to have one or more of his many children take part. [312] This was a means of assuring himself of the devotion, generally regarded as unfailing, of these soli-ma whose "birth" into man's estate he had honored and who, by virtue of the ceremony itself, were thus linked to some of his own children. Mostly these young men would then swell the ranks of the sofa.

This army, which might be said to be a regular army, theoretically received everything it needed from the fama: mounts, equipment, weapons, ammunition, etc. This justified the very considerable share of booty kept by the fama himself; he was thus repaid for what he had furnished, was provided with resources needed to replace what had been destroyed, and finally, was able to add to the store of equipment needed to make war. There was also the special need to increase the clan's treasury with a view to all possible eventualities.

The army was augmented by allied or volunteer contingents. The allies had a solemn agreement with the clan, based on a

614 religious and reciprocal oath. Their contribution entitled them
701 to a share of the booty. Volunteers, who enlisted for an engagement or a whole campaign, came in under conditions settled in advance.

The fama furnished the allies, just as he did the volunteers, with whatever they needed and deducted the amount from their share of the loot. Sometimes a third party, not involved in the expedition, provided mounts, equipment, and weapons for the enterprise in exchange for a prearranged reward.

In short, armed pillage was a business directed by the fama, who could admit interested participants if he so desired. If the operation were successful, the clan gained predominance over
[727] the conquered regions, which the fama then exploited as he saw fit. The booty was the first result of the enterprise, and it served both to pay the expenses incurred in the affair and to swell the treasury of the clan.

This explains why the clan's army, for a consideration, hired itself out to anyone who asked for support, as an ally, as a mercenary force, or in any other capacity. The army might simply intervene in a quarrel of its own accord when there seemed to be profit to be gained (1). [313]

1. See below how the fama of Ségou lent his support to a marabout of Sous. The Bambara also intervened on numerous occasions in the internal quarrels of Khasso, Boundou, Fouta, etc. Their role as mercenaries is clearly shown in the Tarikh es Soudan.

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701 The ton'-dyon' were distinguished by a special hair ar-
567 rangement. Their heads were completely shaved except for three
[302] tufts of hair which formed two braids on the crown of the head and one at the nape of the neck.

The slaves of the household of the fama could be recognized by their well-known tattoo (1) which consisted of three

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1. In general, it is risky to depend

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incautiously on tattooing as a distinguishing mark of race or even of rank; the tattoo described here has not only been used by people of various origins, but has even been appropriated by all kinds of people as a form of snobbishness.

parallel cuts from temple to lower jaw on either side of the face. Furthermore, these people borrowed the dyamu of the fama (Kouloubali, Dyara, etc.), just as certain servants in some of the French provinces are called by their master's name because they are members of the household bearing that name.

614 701 411 The elite troops (sofa, ton'-dyon', etc.) were armed with axes (sukala) (2). Important chiefs also had axes, the insignia of

2. An instrument's name derived from suka, a variant of sua, meaning "to pierce." The men armed with axes were, in fact, assigned the special task of "making a breach" in the wall inclosing the settlement under attack.

command, sometimes made of precious metal, such as copper or silver. The axe carried by the fama was made of gold and enchased (3).

3. The chronicle relates that Tonmassa, after murdering Dékoro, carried off the golden axe, the symbol of supreme command.

The spear (tama) was often regarded as a weapon of distinction also. The ordinary warriors were armed with bows (kala) and arrows (bimye), the latter usually poisoned.

[177] Guns (marfa) gradually came into use, imported by native traders (Dyula). The chronicle claims that the first firearms were introduced among "the people of Ségou" in Mamari's time by an army from Kong and that these guns were of the blunderbuss type.

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411 Chiefs and other notables carried a short sabre (m-pan) slung from their shoulders. These were probably Turkish in origin and were largely ceremonial weapons.

614 The troops wore no specific uniform. Only a few of the
714 more important personages were recognizable by certain insignia, and it sometimes happened that certain individuals were honored by distinguishing marks. The chronicle tells us that Mamari [314] had Ngolo Dyara outfitted in red, a uniform particularly desired. Likewise, he gave Tonmassa a pair of trousers that were unusually wide and consequently attracted everyone's attention.

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614 Drummers (dunu) and trumpeters (buru) made up a mili-
701 tary clique which also included men who played xylophones (bala) and various accessory instruments, especially bells (tana, veleni, etc.), and gourds half-filled with pebbles or grain.

The drum beaten to sound a rally, which was, therefore, in a manner of speaking, the announcer of war, was the tabala. The cylinder, bowl-shaped and usually made of wood or sometimes pottery, was covered with an ox-hide, often untanned,
[766] which was stretched by thongs tied under the drum. In theory, this drumhead was always changed at the death of a fama, when the skin was broken as a sign of mourning (1), and was replaced

1. It should be noted that the destruction of the drumhead is comparable with the killing of the dead chief's dog and the presentation of a dead chicken to his relatives. All these are obviously "intentional breaks."

by the hide of the ox sacrificed in honor of the deceased. The tabala was carried horizontally between two men by means of leather grips and a third individual beat it by means of a ball attached to his wrist by a leather thong.

Other drums were of varying sizes and shapes. Some were carried under the arm (dunkan') or slung from the shoulder (tama); others, mounted on three feet (dange), presented a horizontal

534 beating surface. The most highly regarded was the denu-ba;
614 made of a hollowed cylindrical trunk with fairly thick walls,
701 the denu-ba is sometimes more than a meter high, with its lower third often slightly tapered with an adze. The drumhead is made of strong hide, reinforced in the center by a patch of leather sewed to it and stretched on pegs driven into the sides of the drum a few centimeters below the upper edge. When it is to be played, the drum is inclined on a fork that supports it. The drummer uses a kind of wooden hook, cleverly curved for elasticity and provided at one end [315] with a rounded part, often formed by a swelling contrived for the purpose or at other times made of a leather ball. The drummer's free hand provides the syncopation.

In certain cases, two denu-ba are used together; the drummer strikes them in such a way as to obtain a variety of sounds to form the basis for conventional harmony. Thus, the soldiers not only were trained to obey appropriate flourishes, but also were kept in touch with distant battalions by means of the drums. When it was skillfully played, the denu-ba made it possible to transmit information for considerable distances, because other drummers would retransmit it in turn. That is why it has been said that the denu-ba can talk and no doubt why it was so highly regarded by the ton'-dyon' that they considered it an oracle and honored the god who spoke through the drum by making the denu-ba the boli of this god. Hence, human victims came to be sacrificed to the drums of the ton'-dyon', especially under Ngolo, according to the chronicle.

Trumpets (buru) were formerly made of ivory. The Tedzkiret speaks of the ivory trumpets used by a certain Bambara named Maro, and Mage relates that Ahmadou, Sultan of Ségou, gave the Bambara their ivory trumpets on the occasion of the Moslem festival.

These ivory trumpets, however, have disappeared, no doubt carried off by traders. Trumpets made of horn, which were used concurrently with the ivory instruments, have been substituted for them. The horns of the large antelope are much in demand for this purpose. An opening is made a few centimeters from the pointed end, and the trumpeter makes the sound through this opening. The only result is a loud but monotonous noise.

534 The xylophone (bala) consists of a table made of strips
614 of hardwood, with a gourd under each strip, like a resonator;
701 the size of each gourd depends on the note desired. A section of the gourd is stopped by the vibrating surface which is a white material very closely woven like a cobweb. When it is played well, the bala produces various tunes, but they seem very thin compared to the noise of the drums and the shrieking of the trumpets. [316]

The accessory bells are of no particular interest.

538 No expedition of any consequence ever set out without a
701 griot (dyeli) (1). The griot has acquired a deplorable reputation

1. See above, pp. et seq., on the dyeli.

because of the fact that too often he uses his fluency to exploit the rich and powerful. This should not hide the fact, however, that the griot has often played a role not lacking in grandeur. In addition to being the official archivist of one or more families, he was also, in the native sense, a kind of epic bard who told his
[534] tales in song, accompanying himself on a stringed instrument similar to a guitar or a rudimentary harp. When told by him, the traditions, involved with those miracles so dear to the native, had something of the quality of our medieval epics. In that respect, at least, the griot truly deserved his title of dyeli (master).

Unfortunately, however, being reduced to earning his keep by making use of his information, he resorted to slander and calumny. This made him so much to be feared that in order to buy his silence the victims despoiled themselves for his benefit, as did those whom he intoxicated with base flattery.

538 In the army the griot stirred and encouraged the brave
701 men. On the eve of an important engagement or shortly before it,
726 a large assembly customarily was held, and roused by the epic poems of the griot no less than by the war dances and copious libations, the warriors promised under oath to perform such and such acts of great courage. It was then the duty of the griot to take public note, so to speak, of this commitment and later,

538 814 that the griot is often a wretched character, an insignificant parasite living at the expense of everyone. There are those among them, however, who carry out their duties as archivist very faithfully and who are sincerely devoted to their masters, great and generous lords in the native fashion whose interests and reputations such griot ably defend.

It is griot of this last type who transmit the reliable historical tradition from which we have borrowed the foregoing accounts. There [318] is no doubt that these griot, true "masters" (dyeli) of historical traditions, have played a considerable role in native society. Therefore their words should never be passed over lightly, although obviously they should be subjected to judicious criticism.

The To-da

614 631 In origin, evolution, and contingencies, the clan developed from the social bases already studied, community and brotherhood, of which it is, in the last analysis, only an amalgamation. As a result, its various manifestations are similar to those of these institutions, even though possessing its own peculiarities.

One of the most characteristic features of the clan is the to-da, which was the familiar term used by members of the clan for the region in which they lived. The word literally means "the pot of mush" and alludes to the essential element in the corporate banquets of the fla-n-ton'. As the saying goes: "furu-ba to, to kadi, na ka ko, (at the corporate meal the mush is good and the sauce is bad.") [539]

The to-da originally was limited to Ségou-koro and its immediate environs, i.e., the small number of villages affiliated with the ton' either voluntarily or by force. It progressively extended its sway along the Niger: first on the right bank as far as Kirango; later almost to Dina; finally it extended its influence over a broad area on both sides of the river from Kan ga-ba to Timbuktu.

This territory was organized in various ways. The key region ran along the Niger from Dina to Kirango, and the sector

614 between Ségou-koro and Kirango was the area under what we
631 would call direct administration, because this zone was occupied substantially by the fama, his community, and his ton'-dyon'.

614 Ségou-koro, which had witnessed the birth and the de-
794 velopment of the clan, had remained Mamari's capital; he preferred to live there, and he had installed the protective idols of the clan there. Thus it was, so to speak, the seat of the brotherhood, whose four principal idols continued to be known under the names of ba Kongo-ba, na n-Golo ko, Nye-dinge-dun', and Kolo-koloni. [319]

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The fama was the high priest, and the other officiants of the cult were chosen from among the ton'-dyon'; that is why Ngolo Dyara was dye-n-fa. Any follower of Mamari or his successors was affiliated with the cult of these idols. The adepts who lived far from Ségou-koro founded branches which in certain ways were so dependent on the capital that Ségou-koro was for a long time regarded as a holy city.

We have no detailed knowledge concerning the cult of these important idols; we only know that in general they did not differ greatly from what we have already said about the nyana of the boli. The annual festival was exceptionally solemn and brought the faithful from even quite distant regions. The fama, of course, presided over the ceremony which involved certain essential rites: a renewal of religious faith, the reception of new
614 members, and an oath of loyalty to the fama.

794 The four deities mentioned above were not the only ones
776 in the Bambara pantheon at Ségou (1); others were added, some

1. In Les Bambara [The Bambara], Father Henry mentions, in addition to ba Kongo-ba and na-n-Golo-ko, two other idols, Kuantara and Safolo.

bought and others invented out of the extravagant faith of the ton'-dyon'. Among the latter should no doubt be included the drums of the ton'-dyon', which are mentioned several times in the accounts and which are presented always in a very bloodthirsty light. Ngolo sacrificed his most hated enemies to the drum-idols,

614 794 776 beginning with his relatives, to avenge his hatred toward them for selling him into slavery. It seems likely that the establishment of these ferocious deities may well date from the time of this despot and perhaps was due to his personal initiative.

The "people of Ségou" also held in high esteem the deities of the people they conquered. Indeed, there is no doubt that they constituted the most precious part of the booty of war. The Toucouleur [Tukolor] relate that when they entered Ségou-Sikoro they found an idol in chains; it was the protective deity of a group of the Nono-n-kobe people of the cliff of Bandiagara. With the evident intention of keeping this conquered people forever enslaved, the Bambara had captured their god and were having its cult observed by its own priest, kept captive likewise for the purpose (2). [320]

2. See Desplagnes, Le plateau central nigérien [The Nigerian Central Plateau], p. 175.

The chronicle shows that the Komo also figured in the Ségou pantheon, and if one refers to what we have said about this brotherhood, he will understand the important role it played in the to-da since the fama himself acted as Komo-tigi.

614 794 761 [266] There is absolutely no doubt that cannibalism was in favor on certain definite occasions and, according to appropriate ritual, especially, at the time of the election of a fama. It is obvious, in any case, that under the despotic rule of the clan human life had little value. The atrocities of Dékoro, the passiveness of his victims, the help given him in the execution of his worst crimes by the very people who were directly threatened -- these are not isolated cases. They are indicative of the basic Sudanese temperament in general, which, if not innate, at least is affected by a very ancient atavism. It is because this kind of arbitrary command over the lives of individuals has been practiced for so many centuries that the Bambara often remain impassive in the face of death. They consider its unforeseen occurrence, even when sudden and the result of man's

614 794 761 own action, as a possible daily eventuality which should cause no surprise.

The practice of this implacable ferocity must also be considered the natural source of that kind of burning faith, as intransigent as it is horrible in our eyes, which is capable of nullifying all the feelings of affection that we regard as natural. When Ngolo realized that he had aroused dangerous ambitions in his son Ntyi, he decided that he could not escape the danger he himself had created except by a sacrifice in keeping with the contingency, and with his own hand and without hesitation, he sacrificed Ntyi's son, his own grandson.

Stubborn Bambara are often heard to say: "You may kill me; I will not yield." Tyitya's resistance shows that this is no idle boast; this same affair also shows the aspiration toward equality, so basic in the Bambara, which makes it impossible for him to bow before his fellows. Another example of the same quality is to be seen in the resistance of the "elders" whom Mamari, even he, could subdue only by murder.

794 614 769 To complete the description of the somewhat mystical features of the clan of "those of Ségou," let us recall that after [321] Mamari's death he was honored by a cult: on the part of his natural descendants because he had been their fa; on the part of the people of the clan because he had been fama; and finally, on the part of the faithful of the idols' cult because he had been the high priest. Under this aegis there was a fusion of sorts of all the people who recognized mutual bonds because they were all spiritual sons of Mamari. This relationship was the excuse used by the ton'-dyon' when they usurped supreme power, and the right of the leaders of the ton'-dyon' to succeed to the office of fama was in fact settled by the expedient of treating this relationship as though it were true descent. This cult took its characteristics from the cult of the idols. When Tonmassa began his duties [782] as high priest, his first act was to honor the manes of Mamari, and the offering was the same as that always made to ba Kongo-ba when a new fama was elected: a man and an ox.

614 794 Such are some of the characteristics of the faith that united the "people of Ségou" by ties which, without metaphor, can be called bloody. It is true, of course, that the clan's

614 794 leading men made use of the cults to realize their ambitious designs and to gratify their personal hatreds. From that point of view it can indeed be said that religion was a means of domination. It would be altogether too simple, however, to say that these cults had no other reason for existence than to maintain terror as the basis of the power of the fama. Any such facile opinion should be discarded, because the facts should be evaluated, not from the outside, but rather in the native milieu. It then certainly appears possible that they are of the same order as the many phenomena already examined.

This powerful religious focus animated the whole clan. Impetus, direction and control belonged to the fama, whose role was conditioned, as we have seen, by the attitudes of the furu-ba dyon' and especially of the ton'-dyon', both of which were represented by the dyon'-kuntigi who were, in a sense, their agents. Was it not inevitable that there should be a kind of spiritual current, supposedly emanating from the idols, which inspired the fama and the furu-ba dyon' and then returned to the idols in the form of a cult? How could such a constant preoccupation with the supernatural not make a deep impression? This preoccupation haunts the natives everywhere and always, [322] and they express it in ways that are in perfect harmony with their world, however ridiculous they may appear to European logic and reason.

614 621 The Ségou area acquired special importance because of the presence of the community of the fama, which settled there under remarkable circumstances.

It is usual in any important community for the first-born son to be set apart. Destined to succeed the fa upon his death, he is prepared for his future responsibilities by being given the management of a portion of the joint property. As the fa grows older, the role and the importance of this eldest son increase.

*173 614 When a community is sufficiently wealthy, a privileged position is likewise given to the eldest sons of the other wives of the fa, because he is always forced to distribute favors equally among his various wives whose jealousy may have far-reaching effects. Upon the death of a fa, many difficulties arise, stemming from his all too obvious preferences. An example of this was the

*173 • 614 fratricidal warfare that broke out when Ngolo Dyara died. Nyana-n-koro, the son of a wife who was free and also a favorite, had been favored by the fa during his lifetime. He therefore was not willing to take second place to Ma-n-son, whose mother was the eldest wife but had been a slave.

Since the community of Ségou had become exceedingly rich by appropriating the property of the clan, which the fama legally was supposed only to manage all the first-born sons of the successive fama were generously endowed, and their private residences were to be found, one after the other, along the banks of the Niger or near it.

So it was that, of Ngolo Dyara's sons, Ntyi lived at Bamabougou, Ma-n-son at Pébala, Nyana-n-koro at Ségou-koro, Péné Mamourou at Ségou-bougou, Ba at Bia, Séri at Sofinna, Dyon-kelé at Kirango, etc.

Ma-n-son's sons lived as follows: Da at Pébala, then at Bamabougou; Tyéfolo at Koké; Ben at Kirango; Nyéné-m-ba at Oftala; Sibiri at Diani; Fissa at Nango, etc.

A further result of these usurpations was that appanages were set up to benefit other relatives of the fama, for instance, Dyidi, a brother of the fama Ngolo Dyara, was granted [323] all the territory between Dougou-fin and Dyam-bougou (more than 600 villages) (1).

1. According to the chronicle.

Finally, Mamari and the other fama after him were shrewd enough to place the principal dyon'-kuntigi under the control of various members of their respective communities: mothers, wives, sons, brothers, etc. Mamari's mother, Sanou Saro, had authority over the dyon'-kuntigi Na-n-koro-ba-n-Zangné; the head of the sofa, Kolé, and Allah-n-siré were dependents of Mamari's wife, the mother of his eldest son, Ba-dyi; Tonmassa was a dependent of his son Bakari.

By this means, the closest and deepest kind of solidarity developed between the family of the fama and the people of the clan. This fact, added to the spiritual solidarity which

*173 we have just noted, would have formed an unbreakable bloc
● 614 if both elements had not been affected by the ferment of dissociation referred to in the course of this study.

[487] The to-da derived the larger portion of its prosperity from the Niger. Communication and transport could most easily be maintained along this artery, and it was the need to make the greatest possible use of the river that brought about the organization of the Somono.

[101] Etymologically, the word Somono simply means "fisher-
[564] man." Like any trade practiced exclusively, professional fishing involves a certain loss of standing, and that is why the Somono are said to be people of caste. This status is especially due to the supremacy of the clan over the Somono, without whom it could not have exploited the river.

614 After using force to annex them, Mamari added to their
564 number by assigning some of the furu-ba dyon' to the group, so
*173 that the Somono were soon closely dependent on the furu-ba. At the orders of the fama and his agents, they were required to
[505] maintain ferry service across the river, to provide river transport in both directions, and to pay a fee in kind on their catch, with the understanding that they could continue to live according to the traditional Somono customs.

In return, the Somono were under the protection of the clan and their leaders benefitted from the generosity of the fama. They would occasionally be given a share of booty. [324]

Little by little, the few original Somono families were lost in the flood of newcomers. These included: the furu-ba dyon' who had become Somono on orders from the fama; people of diverse origins who had adopted Somono status of their own accord because they found it better than their own; and finally, the children of both, who were Somono by birth.

It was likewise the exploitation of the property of the
[233] to-da that brought about a similar organization of the shepherds, or Peul. Let us first note that this term has no ethnic significance; it designates all who raise or watch over animals as a regular and professional occupation. Here, too, there is a kind of loss of standing, since a working shepherd could hardly do without a sponsor and must attach himself to a master. This is the case for

614 564 *173 all who exercise a calling, and that is why the Bambara call a Peul "fula fantan' (weak Peul)" (1), to indicate that he is in potestate.

1. See in Chapter 7 below [not translated] how this expression is used as an insult in the quarrel between Ma-n-son and Bacari Dyan.

In order to ensure the greatest return from the clan's flocks, Mamari had recourse to the Peul, just as when he wanted to exploit the Niger, he had taken over the Somono. That is how Peul settlements came to be established, called furu-ba fla-u, "Peul of the furu-ba.". These are free people, but they are required to serve the clan. The ranks of these first Peul were increased by the arbitrary assignment of some of the furu-ba dyon'; some pastoralists by choice joined them; and the children of both groups were furu-ba fla-a by birth. This went on until there were enough of them for Ngolo Dyara to set up twelve Peul encampments. Mamari divided them into two tribes: the Dyana (people of Dyan), and the Bonguéna (people of Bongué). The furu-ba fla-u speak Bambara, and very few of them can claim to be Peul in ethnic origin. [563]

In the case of the Somono and the Peul, we have seen how the clan exploits the populace, for any people on which the clan forces its authority is treated in the same way. The clan requires a contribution, according to the means of livelihood from each of the population groups it assimilates. The system used for the fishermen and the shepherds was likewise used for the agriculturalists. [325]

In this case, too, the furu-ba dyon' were blended with the rural peoples. Although they were relegated to special villages, this isolation never prevented them from maintaining close relations with the people in the surrounding areas.

Here again, there were agriculturalists by adoption. Through time heredity consolidated the close union between these people of the agricultural caste and the clan.

•614 *173 Wherever there was need for it, the clan was represented by agents to guard its interests. Theoretically, these agents did not interfere in purely local matters; their duty was to avert or repress hostile acts, to ensure the payment of fees, and to see that the orders of the fama were carried out. Actually, however, claiming that the fulfillment of their mission required it, they modified everything to the advantage of the clan since they had the authority to do so.

They brought the weak under the aegis of the clan and also people of caste who were always in search of a powerful and generous master. They furthered the projects of the ambitious so long as they were in harmony with the policy of the clan. They transformed tributaries into allies and, in short, at all times assisted in furnishing large contingents for the clan.

Furthermore, many villages chose the "people of Ségou" as their chiefs, either of their own volition in order to acquire the good will of the fama or under open or dissimulated pressure. In this way, extensive regions near Ségou and even at some distance were incorporated.

Thus one can see how the fame of the power and strength of the fama spread far and wide, carried also by the Dyula, who were emissaries constantly on the move, and more generally by traders of every race and origin who came to Ségou to do business.

That is why a marabout of Sous, Ali ben Haidara, requested Mamari's aid when he was attacked in his mosque by Sultan Er Rechid. After Mamari had received two Spanish or Portuguese women from Ali, he permitted him to settle at Timbuktu and refused to turn him over to Er Rechid, who had dispatched troops to capture him (1). [326]

1. Tradition has it that, after a stay of several months, Ali returned to Sous, taking several thousand Blacks with him to attack Er Rechid. The latter had died in the meantime, so Ali released his mercenaries and they were rehired by Ismaïl, the new sultan. They are said to have formed the corps of the Abid, Negro soldiers especially assigned to guard the Sultan of Morocco.

2: Monteil--359 G-5 (1902-1923) 1924 FA8 Bambara FA8

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Ngolo Dyara's fame spread in the same way, even reaching Morocco. Jackson, the English consul at Mogador in 1800, speaks of him, under the corrupted name of Wooloo, as ruling over Djenné and Timbuktu.

3. Clan of the Massa-si or the "People of Kaarta"

In sum, this clan does not differ essentially from that of the people of Ségou, whose origin, development, and organization we have just described. Some of the characteristics peculiar to it are as follows.

Its origin is marked by some alliances, by fraternization, and oath or marriage, which involved Sounsan or Massa Kouloubali and Fa Siné Dyara, some Taracré, and some Konaré. This small nucleus existed and prospered through banditry, and the proceeds were distributed in accordance with agreements among the participants.

Then the Kouloubali acquired a superior position by confiscating a caravan of slaves. They bound these slaves by oath and thus founded a kind of association (ton') in which the following elements can be discerned.

1. The fama, chosen from the Kouloubali-Massa-si family; the members of that family and their allies, among whom Fa Siné Dyara and his descendants held the highest position: Kassi Konaré and his descendants.

2. The ton'-dyon', that group of people who gave up their freedom to benefit the clan.

3. The clan does not seek territorial conquests, but rather seeks to subjugate peoples so as to derive the greatest possible profit from them, either by enslaving them or by forcing them to make various kinds of payments, hence the other element of the clan, the tributaries.

The historical account tells us that the region occupied or controlled by the members of the clan of the Massa-si was virtually always undergoing change and that the capital, too, was moved as circumstances required. [327] All of this shows the true nature of this organism; it was a parasite.

*173 In principle, it did not interfere with anything that was
●614 not contrary to its own interests, and within those limits it allowed the conquered peoples to live as they pleased. In regions under its control, however, its operations were not without influence, and it employed measures analogous in every way to those applied by the clan of Ségou.

Organization and Operation

766 The following description of the funeral of a Massa-si
614 fama and the installation ceremonies for his successor will show us the principal customs and important personages in action.

[768] When the fama dies, the leader of the slaves assumes command of the royal household; he has all the doors watched and summons the wives of the deceased and takes their jewels and any other objects of value. He places all the valuables in a hut, and he himself keeps the key.

While this is going on, the war drums (tabala) are broken, and the sofa are dispatched to inform members of the family.

When the heir presumptive arrives, the leader of the slaves shows him the body of the deceased, so he can officially identify it, and the collection of valuables so he will know that they have not disappeared. The sofa are then sent to the capital to announce the death of the fama in order that everyone will bring an offering for the funeral ceremonies. The gifts of food will be used for the funeral banquets, and the other gifts (silver, horses, fabrics, etc.) will become part of the royal treasure, even though they are theoretically supposed to be used as alms for the poor.

The body is washed, wrapped in a shroud, and then buried. Burial usually takes place within the royal house, at the place where the deceased liked to sit. If he is interred in the floor of a hut, the hut is abandoned after its door has been walled up.

The door of the central redoubt (tata) is also walled up, and a new opening is made.

766 614 White oxen are sacrificed on the tomb; their hides are used to make new drumheads for the tabala, and the meat [328] is offered to the manes of the deceased and then distributed among members of the family, allies, familiars, etc. The women wail, weep, and sing the praises of the deceased in company with the people of caste who organize everything. Outside, [786] banquets and virtual orgies, complete with noisy dances and songs, are organized in honor of the deceased.

This ceremony goes on for seven days.

614 At the close of this period, the new fama is publicly proclaimed. For this purpose, the leader of the slaves has the walled-up door of the tata reopened, and the whole company assembles in the large open area in front of the house of the fama. Those present include the newly elected fama, the members of the family of the Massa-si, allies, tributaries, heads of the ton'-dyon', and the sofa.

[769] [782] An ox has been sacrificed and offered to the manes of the defunct. Its hide is stretched in the center of an open area surrounded by the crowd, and on it is spread out the sheepskin, adorned with precious amulets, which has long served as a rug for the fama of the Massa-si. Other precious family relics include [301] the scarlet cap adorned with amulets, twists of gold for the ears, and heavy silver bracelets.

The representative of the family of Kassi Konaré seats the newly elected fama on the sheepskin, puts the scarlet cap on his head, and adorns him with the gold earrings and silver bracelets. Then he makes a speech to the new fama, outlining the policies followed by his deceased predecessor and enumerating the desiderata of the people of the clan.

[567] At this point the leader of the slaves prostrates himself before the new fama and places himself in his hands to show that all the ton'-dyon' are loyal to him. He then presents individually the principal groups of slaves, tributaries, etc.

Another ceremony brings the new fama, prominent Massa-si, their allies, the principal leaders of the slaves, and the tributaries to the wood sacred to the protective idol of the clan, where a reciprocal oath of loyalty is taken. A ritual communion follows.

614 Lengthy and noisy festivities, where dlo (millet beer) flows freely, food is abundant, and songs and dances are performed, [329] mark the general rejoicing. They last for seven days, but forty days must elapse before the new fama is deemed definitively installed.

In theory, the new fama must turn over the management of his own community to his heir presumptive. In fact, however, this retirement is usually fictitious. The fama intermingles his [421] own property and the property he administers for the clan to such an extent that, in the last analysis, the Massa-si and everything dependent on them -- persons and things -- are an inherent and inseparable part of the clan. Under the cover of this confusion, the general and determined tendency of all the fama was to work unceasingly at confiscation from the clan for the benefit of the community of the Massa-si. At least they have managed to make their office absolutely hereditary, with no possibility of competition, and as a result the election is merely the public recognition as fama of whatever individual is considered by the Massa-si to be fa of their community.

This accounts for the superior role of the Massa-si. They are the provincial governors, heads of army corps, etc., thus confirming the seizure of all sorts of clan property by the Massa-si community.

The corps of sofa is particularly powerful, and through it the fama is easily able to counterbalance any attempted insubordination which sometimes shows itself among the heads of the ton'-dyon'. The leader of the slaves is, in any case, the personal tool of the fama.

184 These measures emphasize the close connection between
614 the fama and the ton'-dyon'. On examination, this appears to be much closer than at Ségou, because from the very beginning in Kaarta the fama assured himself of unquestioned pre-eminence over the ton'-dyon', and later he was able to remain free of the influence of the ton' and even to impose his authority by relying on the loyalty of the sofa.

There was another peculiarity in the fact that the principal allies of the Massa-si, the Konaré, called Kala-n-ka-u (people

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614 from Kala), are priests of the protective idol of the clan. This clan brotherhood is likewise very strong and gives valuable support to the fama by guaranteeing everyone's loyalty to him. Each army corps, each segment of the clan of whatever sort, is organized as a branch of this brotherhood, so that not only everything [330] that belongs to the clan but actually everything that touches it in any way is subject to the same religious guardianship.

In Kaarta, as in Ségou, the ton'-dyon' are divided into chiefdoms of varying importance. With the fama, the principal chiefs of the ton'-dyon' form a kind of permanent council of the clan. On the other hand, the familiars of the fama, chosen at his pleasure, constitute a privy council whose influence is often in conflict with the decisions and desires of the council of the dyon'-kuntigi.

As at Ségou, the supreme leader of the slaves has a very important position, but aside from the fact that he is a tool of the fama, the homogeneity of the ton' prevents him from developing into as dangerous an antagonist as the ton'-masa at Ségou.

The general assemblies are also somewhat different from those at Ségou. They are made up of other elements; in addition to the fama and his people, the dyon'-kuntigi, and the ton'-dyon, there are the allies, whose role is not insignificant, and also some important tributaries, Diawara and Kagoro, who make their importance felt and thus influence the fama. Hence, especially when grave situations arise, these assemblies have a certain amount of independence which imposes decisions on the fama.

The revenue of the clan, generally speaking, does not differ from that at Ségou.

In conclusion and by way of comparison with the people of Ségou, the clan of the Massa-si appears to be more homogeneous because in the beginning it was not restricted by the framework of a pre-existent native institution. It was formed and developed freely through the initiative of the Massa-si family, which always jealously safeguarded its management.

2: Monteil--364 G-5 (1902-1923) 1924 FA8 Bambara FA8

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614 On the other hand, it closely resembles the clan of the Khasso region, on which we have published a detailed study (1). [331]

1. See Les Khassonké in the series Revue du Monde musulman.

Chapter 6

Islam

1. Islamism and Paganism

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797 It is a commonplace to say that the Bambara are implacable enemies of Islam.

However, history shows that for centuries the Bambara have been living in contact with Islam, that they maintain close relations with native communities of Islamic converts, and that they are willing to seek the good offices of marabouts of all races and ranks.

Are they, besides, as refractory to conversion as they are said to be? The chiefs of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta and some of their near connections and intimates, as well as other notables, have been practicing Islam. The Somono, who are of Bambara extraction, are faithful believers and, what is even more significant, they are fervent propagandists for Islam.

Actually, paganism and Islamism are not mutually antagonistic dogmas in the minds of the Bambara or of the Sudanese people in general, as many Europeans believe and state it to be. In these regions, Islamization has a counterpart which prepares the way for it and explains it, and that is the "sudanization" of Islam.

During his sojourn in Kaarta Raffenel tells of an interesting incident: "I had as a landlord a blacksmith named Niany, a grotesque personage, excessively naive and with a corresponding sense of logic, but a good fellow and very amusing. One day he

613 reputation for integrity and impartiality than for his knowledge of the books. In other matters, however, his Moslem esoterism is the quality most highly valued.

771 797 It is assumed, besides, that the high priests and other persons of note should be initiated into Islamic matters, which seem to be regarded simply as a branch of occultism to which such persons are especially addicted. The Kouloubali, the Dyara, and other lords of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta have practiced Islamism (1) without betraying paganism; on the

1. In the Sudanese manner, of course.

contrary, by adding to it the luster of these foreign mysteries, it can be said that they have "Sudanized" Islam as completely as possible. Neither Mamari nor Ngolo, for example, was in the least embarrassed by his Moslem practices. Both remained high priests of their tutelary idols and simply borrowed (2) the external

2. This borrowing is done with the same awkwardness as that seen when a Black puts on a suit of European clothes which happens to come into his possession. The ease with which an occasional native can adapt it is exceptional.

"manner" of Islam.

The bloodthirsty Dékoro was a Moslem of the same type. He was preparing to perform his ablutions, followed by his faithful blacksmith, at the very moment when he was assassinated by Tonmassa. And the blacksmith was actually carrying one of the satala which father Niany regarded as so compromising.

614 797 Naturally, the adoption of Islam was never allowed to create any political deviation which might compromise the interests of the clan. That would be treason, and such was the case for Touro-koro Mari. He was put to death not because he was converted to Islam, but because he had enfeoffed himself to El Hadj Omar to such an extent that the clan's independence was threatened.

175 797 When Omar left Ségou in April, 1862, [343] to march against Handallahi, he left his son Ahmadou in command, backed by a guard of 1,500 tabilés and the support of the Bambara chiefs who had sworn loyalty to him.

3. The Results

175 614 797 It is usual to consider Omar's warlike enterprises solely from the point of view of Islam and to attribute their purpose and result to Peul proselytism. Such an explanation is dubious at best and in any case is very ambiguous. This question, however, involves a detailed study which is beyond the scope of this work, so we shall limit ourselves here to the subject at hand.

Omar replaced the clans of Kaarta and Ségou with the clan of the "people of Fouta," claiming that his conquests were due to a desire to convert the Bambara to Islam. In reality, this Moslem label did not change the native customs in the least; the clan of the people of Fouta proved to be conditioned and dominated by the same principles as the clans of Kaarta and Ségou.

The composition of this clan is a proof of this similarity. Omar and his community are at the head of an association made up of the tabilés, the people of Fouta, the usual sofa and ton'-dyon', and the tuburu, who are people converted to Islam by force. All these people, linked by material interests, are brought together by a common faith. Leaders of the slaves hold important military or political posts. What is there in all this that is not already to be found in what we have discussed before? The means used to gain power are identical, and the only thing that differs is the label. It is claimed that Islam instead of paganism constitutes the motivating force.

In general, the evolution of this clan differs not at all from that of the clans already discussed; it can be described in the same terms.

175 797 A man of remarkable intelligence and powers of leadership, Omar would probably have given his achievements the cohesion and stability needed to make them endure if he had lived long enough. However, he died too soon before he had

2. Taboos

•614 825 784 /16/ The Bambara people are divided into several families or lineages each of which bears a special name, or diamou, and sees at its head certain plants or animals as protectors and patrons. The Djara lineage claims kinship with the lion, the kana, or iguana (1), the

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1. A kind of large lizard resembling a small alligator. It lives on river banks and near ponds, and though it prefers the land and climbs trees, it likes to play in the water. The French commonly call it gueule tapée /"smart jaw"/.

boumou, or dondol; the Dambélé with a large black monkey called Ngoba; the Tankara with a spiney silk-cotton tree, the dondol; the Kouloubali with the wild pig /biche cochon?/, the Mpolio (2), and

2. A slimy and spined fish.

the panther. There is not a lineage that does not have one or even several tné, or taboos. As will be seen below, lineages of the same name often regard themselves as bound by a tie of fraternity and friendship, while a difference in the tné shows, that a division occurred at some particular time.

Europeans, churchmen, military men, and civilians, usually call the Bambara tné "totems." Since Long, the one to speak first of "totemism" and "totems," this question has been treated at length by serious and distinguished authors, by competent authorities. Their definitions cannot be applied to the Bambara tné. Striking as is the resemblance of some of them to the totems of the Redskins and the Australians, I cannot apply to them the definition given by Nicolay in speaking of the Redskins: "The Redskins also believe in the existence of spirits peculiar to individuals (as fetishes are to Africans) and which, in animal form, bear the names of totems." (3) The

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3. /Fernand/ Nicolay, /Curiosités des lois et coutumes./ Histoire des croyances, /superstitions, / moeurs, /usages et/ coutumes /(selon le plan du Décalogue) /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. The History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Manners, Ways, and Customs (according to the outline of the Decalogue)/, / Vol. 1, Book 1, Chap. 1. /Paris, 1901.?

Bambara tné are completely different from fetishes and have nothing in common with the latter. In a chapter (1901, p. 61) of his work, "myths, cultes et religions /Myths, Cults, and Religions/, A. Lang defines totemism for us thus:" The word "totemism" or "totamism" was applied for the first time by Long... to the customs of the Indians.. which acknowledges kinship with animals.... Totemists spare animals which are of their flesh and blood...." According to A. Lang, the Redskins and Australians believe themselves to be truly and physically related to the animal-totem, and they number among their grandparents /17/ a doe, a toad, an ant, a rabbit, etc. All actual physical kinship is of course communicated by means of blood, and two beings who have in their veins the blood of the same individual are related. In order to be of the same flesh and blood as their totems, the Redskins and Australians thus believe themselves to be actual sons of an ancestor who formerly was a doe, toad, ant, rabbit.... In Chapter II of his work Histoire des croyances, moeurs et coutumes, Nicolay gives one to understand that the Redskins believe that at the moment of death the spirit of their ancestor found shelter in the body of the animal which serves as totem; is it possible that Lang, who is silent on this point, is unaware of Indian beliefs in metamorphosis and metempsychosis? He does not report the fact anywhere in his work Myths, cultes et religions, but whatever hypothesis one may make on this point, the fact remains that according to him Indian beliefs imply a real physical kinship. If one assumes that the first ancestors of the Indian were changed or metamorphosed at some

614 825 784 given moment into a doe, toad, ant, or rabbit -- a singular evolution if ever there was one, one may suppose that at the moment of the metamorphosis these animals did not exist and they are all, men and animals, of the same flesh and the same blood; or, more plausibly, the ancestors changed themselves into already existing animals, procreating among them does, toads, ants, or rabbits as they had formerly reproduced human beings, so that in killing one of these totem animals a Redskin must always be afraid that he is killing a son or grandson of the ancestor, or some other of the latter's descendants, and therefore of his own flesh and blood (1).

1. /sic/ A. Lang does not seem to doubt that the people of whom he speaks -- Redskins, Tahitians, and Africans -- give a very broad meaning to the words "father," "mother," "brother," "wife," "son," and that they customarily use them to refer to persons with whom they have no bond of kinship.

[578] There is nothing like this for a Bambara. To call someone a wild animal is in his eyes an insult, and to call a man the son of a dog (oulou den) is enough to make him angry, to throw him into a fit of anger; even if he has a dog for a mé, that is a wrong which will sooner or later be avenged. He does not number among his ancestors a dog, or a panther, a lion or a snake. A Kouloubali would be much surprised to learn that a doe gave birth to him, and there is not a Tankara who thinks he has /18/ the sap of the dondol or the juice of its fruit in his veins. When a Djara calls himself the son of a lion, or a Dambélé the son of a big black monkey, what they say must be understood in a very broad sense, as an analogy. We ourselves say of a special benefactor: "He is my father," "he is my mother," "he is my all."

171 614 825 784 Here the Bambara is akin to the Christian Quichés of Guatemala of whom D. G. Brinton speaks in his "Nagualism," 1294, -- O. Stoll

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in his Die Ethnologie der Indianerstämme von Guatemala /The Ethnology of the Indian Tribes of Guatemala/, Leyden, 1882. This work is cited by Lang in Chap. III of Mythes, cultes et religions. His tné is a friend, a protector, and may be defined as follows: it is an animate or inanimate being entitled to the respect and veneration of an entire lineage, family, or clan, in recognition of an outstanding service which has prevented the lineage, family, or clan from disappearing or becoming extinct, or has preserved them from a misfortune.

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Every tne has its legend. Although in the mouth of the black man the tale may be embellished and decorated a little so that it varies somewhat, the substance remains the same. I will translate a few of these legends, preserving both their form and their substance.

Legend of the Two Kouloubali

The people were at war; everywhere there were only fugitives. The Kouloubali lineage had been cruelly stricken and reduced to two members, two brothers lost in the bush with their wives and children. The elder who followed /sic/ his brother at a distance, (since for fear of being surprised, they avoided camping in the same place). He arrived at the bank of a swollen river and saw he could not cross, there being no boats. "Where can I flee now?" he lamented. "I am in the hands of my enemies! For me and my family it is death or slavery." A mpolio was passing by; it heard, was touched by compassion, and, raising its big, bearded head out of the water, called to him: "I can take you over, have no fear!" The elder of the Kouloubali and his family, with their weapons and baggage, settled themselves on the slimy back of the strange fish and crossed the river. Then he said to the fish: "Listen, good mpolio, my brother and his family are over there on the bank. Do not render them the /19/ service that you rendered me, for he is an ingrate, one without a heart, and he might kill you." -- "Kill me? Come now!" and the fish dove, disappeared, and emerged far over near the other bank, at the moment when the young Kouloubali was wondering how his older brother had been able to cross such a wide

773 and deep river when there were no boats. "It is thanks to me," said
614 the mpolio, "place yourself on my spine as he did." And so the
539 younger brother and his wives crossed the river.
784 The young Kouloubali was heartless. When the women had put
825 down their gourds and baskets on the bank, at the moment when the mpolio leaped up and raised the full height of its body out of the water in order to dive and disappear, he threw his spear at it. The fish struggled for an instant, the water foamed, reddened, and then there was quiet: it was dead.

The family of the young Kouloubali cut up the animal and, without shame or remorse, invited the family of the elder brother to come to the feast. "Eat the mpolio," cried the latter, "never! And may there be a curse on any of mine that dares to eat it." Since that day, the mpolio has been the tné of the descendants of the elder Kouloubali.

To some extent it is also the tné of the descendants of the younger brother, but they eat it except for the head.

Legend of a Branch of the Taraoulé

A woman saw all her children die, and so she trembled for her last born, a sickly, puny little boy whom her milk did not help. One day she was alone in her hut crouched on her mat with the child on her knees, spinning cotton when she began to cry and moan: "You will not live, you will join your elder brothers, you will go away and leave me alone." A spitting snake was passing by; he came in and gently coiled himself around the body of the child. The mother let out a cry, and the neighbors came running.... The snake slowly uncoiled and left the dwelling while the child held his arms out to it and smiled. He did not die but became strong and healthy, for the snake had drunk all the gnâma, all elements of illness that were in him. From that day on the Taraoulé branch of which this child is the father does not eat the spitting snake, or n'gorono, for the curse of the ancestor would descend on them: that is, the spitting snake is their tné. /20/

Legend of Another Taraoulé Branch

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A woman was fetching wood in the forest when she was seized with the pains of childbirth. "All alone, what will become of me?" she cried. "I have no one to help me; who will wash my child? Oh! I will take a corpse home with me." She knelt by her load of wood, gave birth to her child, collapsed, and lost consciousness. A big black monkey was munching fruit in a near-by tree; it saw her and was moved.... It played midwife, washed the little creature, rocked him in its arms, and when the mother came to herself it gave her back her little boy. From that day on no descendant of this Taraoulé branch eats ngoba; this big black monkey is their tné, and the ancestor would curse anyone who did so.

Legend of the Two Djara

Two Djara brothers with wives and children were fleeing before their enemies. Overcome with fatigue they sat down in the shade of a dondol determined to go no farther. Actually, they were so plagued by thirst that they could not go on. An iguana was wandering in the vicinity; it had pity on the two Djara, so it climbed the dondol and, working with its tail and feet, succeeded in producing a gentle dew under the tree. All were able to quench their thirst with the sap held in the calyxes of this tree's blossoms. "The kana (iguana) shall from now on be my tné," said the elder, "and I curse any one of my descendants who kills or eats it." -- "Think it over," said the younger, "is it not to the dondol that we owe our lives? Is it not its sap that quenched our thirst? Would it not be better to take this tree as tné?" The two Djara argued, could never agree, and separated. The kana became the tné of the older branch, and the boumou, or dondol, that of the younger branch.

Legend of the Samaké

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My grandfather has often told it to me; he himself got it from his ancestors.... A Samaké -- I cannot tell whether he had been fording the river or driving the stakes to which fishing mats are fastened -- was seized by an alligator which dragged him to the depths of its den. The alligator did not kill him, /21/ for it had fed.... Leaving the unhappy man to his sad thoughts, it withdrew.... It did not go away, however, and from time to time it hit the water with its tail at the entrance of the hole, making it quite clear that there was only one way out and that this was the door. Stretched out in the ooze, the unhappy Samaké moaned: "Who will save me from those terrible claws and those powerful teeth?" An ant lion at the top of the den was watching for flies and ants in the bottom of its pit; it had pity on the man and, working with its two horns, succeeded in bringing in a ray of sunlight to revive the hopes of the Samaké. "Will I be saved?" he asked the ant lion. Two pinches of sand were the answer, and he understood. Working with both hands, he helped the ant lion; the hole grew and he was able to get through. He escaped. When the alligator re-entered its den, exhausted with hunger, it was disappointed not to find its prey there. So as not to invite the curse of their ancestor, the descendants of this Samaké respect and venerate the géré, or ant lion, and it is their tné. Other Samaké have the elephant (sama) for their tné.

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These few legends are sufficient; they all show us that although the Bambara believes that the bond with the tné is simply one of fraternity, friendship, and gratitude and not a bond of real and physical kinship, he nonetheless does not fail to attribute reason and emotion to everything around him, to animals and to plants. In nature he does not find pure matter; rather he attributes human feelings in some degree to everything, and throughout he sees a force, a power, an intangible, which he does not know how to define and which thinks, loves, laments, and weeps.

582 The Bambara tné differs further from the totem of the Redskin
614 and the Australian: it creates no obstacle to marriage between lineages of the same tne or of different tne. Each man takes a wife wherever he finds her and where he thinks best, and through these alliances the lineages mingle, cross, and recross. They do not merge, however, [537] since the husband keeps his name, or diamou, and with it his tné; he does not take that of his wife. As to the children, they have their father's tné, and his only. And it is his name, or diamou, they bear. /22/

194 The Bambara tné is nothing less than a taboo /sic/. The word itself is very vague and difficult to translate into our French language. It implies primarily a prohibitive command, an order not to do, not to act. Whenever a competent authority -- an alleged genie, such as a boli (who speaks and gives his oracles through the mouth of a herald or interpreter, the djélimac) or a priest of the genii (djiné) believed to preside over the elements, the dougoutigi (who actually does nothing without consulting his council and the sorcerers) whenever the sorcerer (the intermediary between man and the invisible world) or a priest of the shades of the ancestors' (1) --, that is, an

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1. This term seems to me the most accurate. Undoubtedly, the gouatigi, or head of the family makes the sacrifices, but his position does not always correspond to what we call in French the father of the family. He is not always married; although all the family except his mother, brothers, and sisters call him m'fa, "my father," the word "father" should be taken in a very broad sense, as he is quite often only a grand-uncle, an uncle, or a cousin.

authority of a religious character, forbids eating, killing, or looking at an animal; cutting, breaking, or using an object; drinking such-